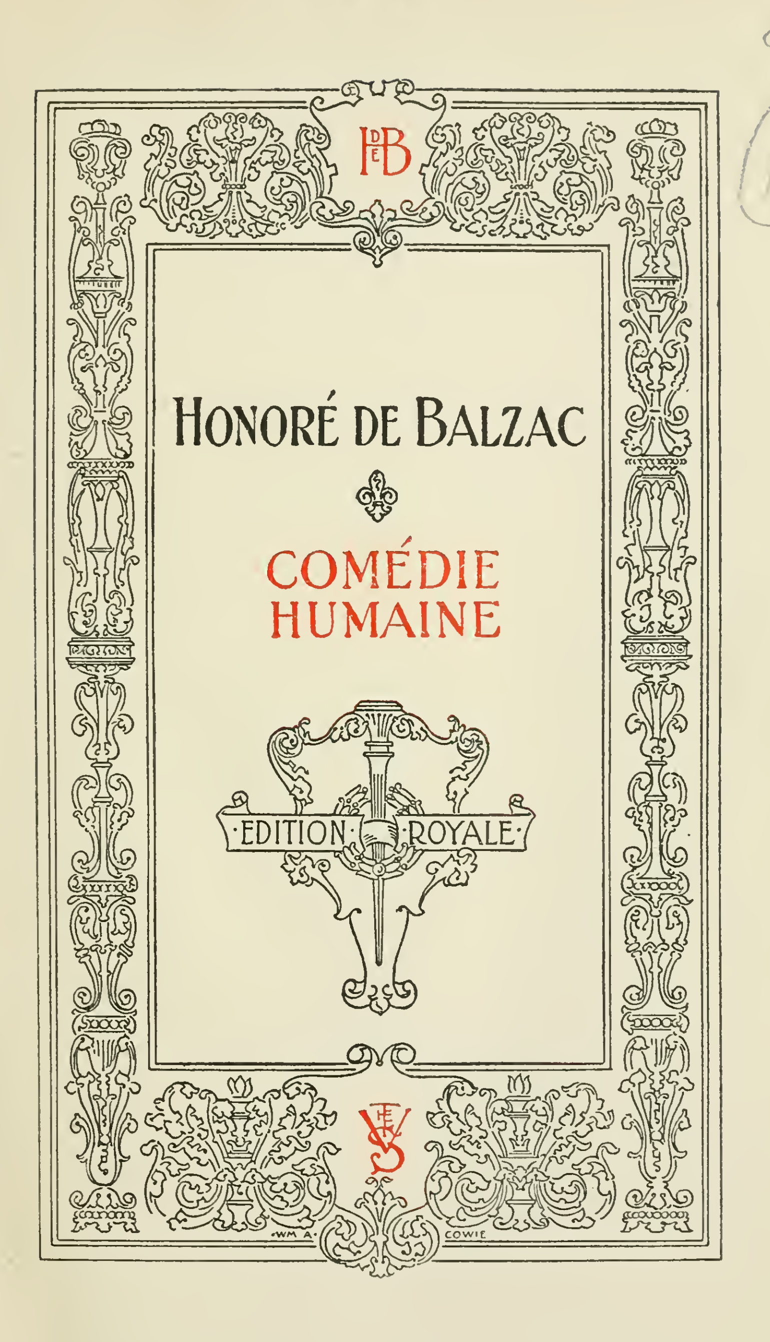

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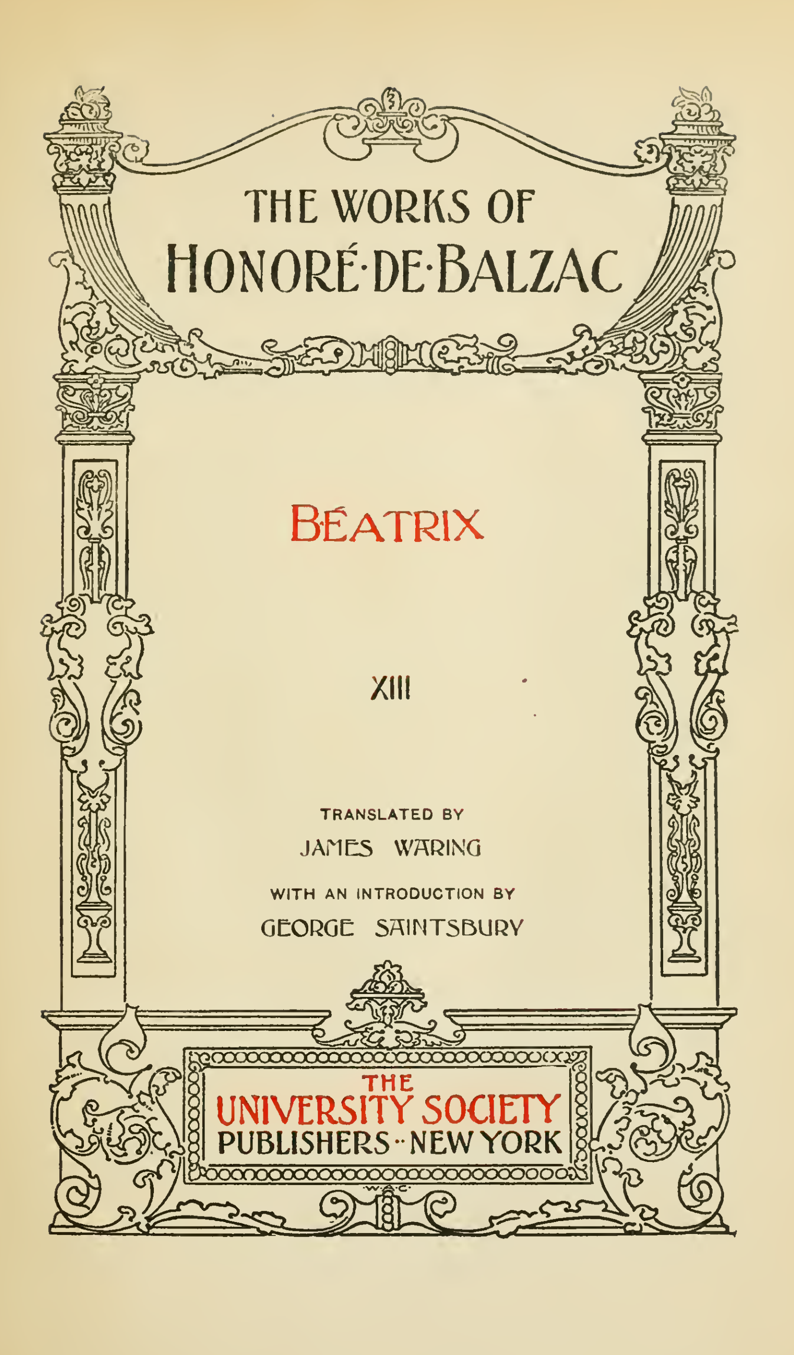

H DE B
HONORÉ DE BALZAC
COMÉDIE HUMAINE
EDITION ROYALE
WM A. COWIE



Balzac's Birthplace, rue Royale, Tours.

Balzac's birth-place, rue Royale, Tours




THE WORKS OF
HONORÉ·DE·BALZAC
BÉATRIX
XIII
TRANSLATED BY
JAMES WARING
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
GEORGE SAINTSBURY
THE
UNIVERSITY SOCIETY
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BÉATRIX

INTRODUCTION

Béatrix was built up in the odd fashion in which Balzac sometimes did build up his novels, and which may be thought to account for an occasional lack of unity and grasp in them. The original book, written in 1838, and published with the rather flowery dedication "to Sarah" at the end of that year, stopped at the marriage of Calyste and Sabine. The last part, separately entitled *Un Adultère Rétrospectif,* was not added till six years later. It cannot be said to be either very shocking or very unnatural that the young husband should exemplify the truth of that uncomfortable proverb, *Qui a bu boira;* and it is perhaps rather more surprising that Balzac should have allowed him to be "refished" (as the French say) in a finally satisfactory condition by his lawful spouse.

Still, I do not think the addition can be considered on the whole an improvement to the book, of which it is at the best rather an appendix than an integral part. The conception of Béatrix herself seems to have changed somewhat, and that not as the conception of her immortal namesake in *Esmond* and *The Virginians* changes, merely to suit the irreparable outrage of years. The end has unsavory details, which have not, as the repetition of them in more tragic form a little later in *La Cousine Bette* has, the justification of a really tragic retribution; and a man must have a great deal of disinterested good nature about him to feel any satisfaction, or indeed to take much interest, in the restoration of the domestic happi-

ness of two such persons as M. and Mme. de Rochefide. Calyste du Guénic, whose character was earlier rather exaggerated, is now almost a caricature, and to me at least the thing is not much excused by the fact that it gives Balzac an opportunity of introducing his pattern gentleman-scoundrel, Maxime de Trailles, and his pet Bohemian, La Palférine. The many-named Italian here indeed plays a comparatively benevolent part, as does Trailles; but they are both as great "raffs" and "tigers" as ever.

The first and larger part of the book, on the other hand,—the book proper, as we may call it,—is a remarkable, a well-designed, and a very interesting study. It is not so much of an additional attraction to me, as it perhaps is to most people, that contemporaries, without much contradiction, or in all cases improbability, chose to regard the parts and personages of Félicité des Touches, Béatrix de Rochefide, Claude Vignon, and the musician Conti, as designed, and pretty closely designed, after George Sand, Madame d'Agoult (known as "Daniel Stern"), Gustave Planche, the critic, and Liszt. As to the first pair, there can, of course, be no doubt; for Balzac, by representing "Camille Maupin" as George Sand's rival, and by introducing divers ingenious and legitimate adaptations of the famous she-novelist's career, both invites, and in a way authorizes, the attribution. There is nothing offensive in it; indeed, Félicité is one of the most effective and sympathetic of his female characters, and would always have been incapable of the rather heartless action by which the actual George Sand amused herself intellectually and sentimentally with lover after lover, and then threw them away. Unless the accounts of Planche that we have are very unfair—and they possibly are, for he

was a critic, and was particularly obnoxious to the extreme Romantic school, which was perhaps why Balzac liked him—Claude Vignon is a still more flattered portrait, though Balzac's low, if not quite impartial, opinion of critics in general comes out in it. Conti may be fair enough for Liszt; and if Béatrix is certainly a libel on poor Madame d'Agoult, it must be remembered that this later Madame de Staël was generally misrepresented in her lifetime, though since her death she has had more justice.

The "key"-interest of books, however, is always a minor, and sometimes a purely illegitimate one. It ought to be sufficient for us that the interest of the quartette, even if there had been no such persons as George Sand, Daniel Stern, Planche, and Liszt in the world, would be very great, and that it is well composed with and maintained by the accessory and auxiliary facts and characters. The picture of the Guénic househeld (which, after Balzac's usual fashion, throws us back to *Les Chouans,* while Béatrix as a Castéran, and thus a connection of the luckless Mlle. de Verneuil, is also connected with that book) may seem to some to be a little too fully painted; it does not seem so to me. Whether, as hinted above, the character of Calyste has its childishness exaggerated or not, I must leave to readers to decide for themselves. His casting of Béatrix into the sea, besides being illegal, may seem to some extravagant; but it must be remembered that Balzac was originally writing when the heyday of the Romantic movement was by no means over, and when melodrama was still pretty fully in fashion. It is difficult, too, to see what better contrast and uniting scheme for the contrasted worldliness of the four chief characters could have been devised; while the childishness itself is not

inconceivable or unnatural in a boy brought up in a sort of household of romance by a heroic father and a doting mother, both utterly unworldly, his head being further fired by participation in actual civil war on behalf of an injured princess, and his heart exposed without preparation to such different influences as those of Mlle. des Touches and of Béatrix.

The contrast of the two ladies is also fine; indeed, Béatrix seems to me, though by no means Balzac's most perfect work, to be an attempt in a higher style of novel writing than any other heroine of his. It is impossible not to suspect in Félicité, good, clever, and so forth as she is, a covert satire on the variety of womankind which had begun to be fashionable. The satire on the unamiable side of mere womanliness which the sketch of Béatrix contains is, of course, open and undeniable. I think that Thackeray has far excelled it, but I am not certain that he was not indebted to it as a pattern. The fault of the French Béatrix has been expressed by her creator on nearly the last page of the book. A woman *sans cœur ni tête* may do a great deal of mischief; but she cannot quite play the part attributed to Madame de Rochefide.

The first two parts of *Béatrix* (in which Madame de Rochefide was at first called Roche*gude*) appeared in the *Siècle* during April and May 1839, with the alternative title *ou les Amours Forcés,* and they were published in book form by Souverain in the same year. They were then divided briefly: the first part, which was called *Moeurs D'Autrefois* in the *Siècle,* and *Une Famille Patriarcale* in the book, had eight headed chapters; the second (*Moeurs d'Aujourdhui* in the first, *Une Femme Célèbre* in the second) eleven; and a

third division, *Les Rivalités,* eight. As a *Scène de la Vie Privée,* which it became in 1842, it had no chapters; it was little altered otherwise; and the present completion was anticipated, though not given, in a final paragraph. It also had the simple title of *Béatrix.* The completion itself did not appear till the midwinter (December-January) of 1844-45. It was first called *Les Petits Manèges d'une Femme Vertueuse* in the *Messager,* and when, shortly afterwards, it was published by Chlendowski as a book, *La Lune de Miel.* In these forms it had fifty-nine headed chapters. In the same year, however, it became, with its forerunners, part of the *Comédie,* and the chapters were swept away throughout. G. S.

BÉATRIX

To Sarah

In clear weather, on the Mediterranean shore, where formerly your name held elegant sway, the waves sometimes allow us to perceive beneath the mist of waters a sea-flower, one of Nature's masterpieces: the lacework of its tissue, tinged with purple, russet, rose, violet, or gold, the crispness of that living filagree, the velvet texture, all vanish as soon as curiosity draws it forth and spreads it on the strand.

Thus would the glare of publicity offend your tender modesty; so, in dedicating this work to you, I must reserve a name which would indeed be its pride. But under the shelter of this half concealment, your superb hands may bless it, your noble brow may bend and dream over it, your eyes, full of motherly love, may smile upon it, since you are here at once present and veiled. Like that gem of the ocean-garden, you will dwell on the fine white level sand where your beautiful life expands, hidden by a wave that is transparent only to certain friendly and reticent eyes.

I would gladly have laid at your feet a work in harmony with your perfections; but as that was impossible, I knew, for my consolation, that I was gratifying one of your instincts by offering you something to protect.

DE BALZAC.

PART I

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FRANCE, and more especially Brittany, still has some few towns that stand entirely outside the social movement which gives a character to the nineteenth century. For lack of rapid and constant communications with Paris, connected only by an ill-made road with the prefecture or chief town to which

they belong, these places hear and see modern civilization pass by like a spectacle; they are amazed, but they do not applaud; and whether they fear it or make light of it, they remain faithful to the antiquated manners of which they preserve the stamp. Any one who should travel as a moral archæologist, and study men instead of stones, might find a picture of the age of Louis XV. in some village of Provence, that of the time of Louis XIV. in the depths of Poitou, that of yet remoter ages in the heart of Brittany.

Most of these places have fallen from some splendor of which history has kept no record, busied as it is with facts and dates rather than manners, but of which the memory still survives in tradition; as in Brittany, where the character of the people allows no forgetfulness of anything that concerns the home country. Many of these towns have been the capital of some little feudal territory—a county or a duchy conquered by the Crown, or broken up by inheritors in default of a direct male line. Then, deprived of their activity, these heads became arms; the arms, bereft of nutrition, have dried up and merely vegetate; and within these thirty years these images of remote times are beginning to die out and grow very rare.

Modern industry, toiling for the masses, goes on destroying the creations of ancient art, for its outcome was as personal to the purchaser as to the maker. We have *products* nowadays; we no longer have works. Buildings play a large part in the phenomena of retrospection; but to industry, buildings are stone-quarries or saltpetre mines, or storehouses for cotton. A few years more and these primitive towns will be transformed, known no more excepting in this literary iconography.

One of the towns where the physiognomy of the feudal ages is still most plainly visible is Guérande. The name alone will revive a thousand memories in the mind of painters, artists, and thinkers who may have been to the coast and have seen this noble gem of feudality proudly perched where it

commands the sand-hills and the strand at low tide, the top corner, as it were, of a triangle at whose other points stand two not less curious relicts—le Croisic and le Bourg de Batz. Besides Guérande there are but two places—Vitré, in the very centre of Brittany, and Avignon in the south—which preserve their mediæval aspect and features intact in the midst of our century.

Guérande is to this day enclosed by mighty walls, its wide moats are full of water, its battlements are unbroken, its loopholes are not filled up with shrubs, the ivy has thrown no mantle over its round and square towers. It has three gates, where the rings may still be seen for suspending the portcullis; it is entered over drawbridges of timber shod with iron, which could be raised, though they are raised no longer. The municipality was blamed in 1820 for planting poplars by the side of the moat to shade the walk; it replied that on the land side, by the sand-hills, for above a hundred years, the fine, long esplanade by the walls, which look as if they had been built yesterday, had been made into a mall overshadowed by elms, where the inhabitants took their pleasure.

The houses have known no changes; they are neither more nor less in number. Not one of them has felt on its face the hammer of the builder, or the brush of the whitewasher, or trembled under the weight of an added story. They all retain their primitive character. Some are raised on wooden columns forming "rows," under which there is a footway, floored with planks that yield but do not break. The shop-dwellings are small and low, and faced with slate shingles. Woodwork, now decayed, has been largely used for carved window-frames; and the beams, prolonged beyond the pillars, project in grotesque heads, or at the angles, in the form of fantastic creatures, vivified by the great idea of Art, which at that time lent life to dead matter. These ancient things, defying the touch of time, offer to painters the brown tones and obliterated lines that they delight in.

The streets are what they were a hundred years ago. Only, as the population is thinner now, as the social stir is less

active, a traveler curious to wander through this town, as fine as a perfect suit of antique armor, may find his way, not untouched by melancholy, down an almost deserted street, where the stone window-frames are choked with concrete to avoid the tax. This street ends at a postern-gate built up with a stone wall, and crowned by a clump of saplings planted there by the hand of Breton Nature—France can hardly show a more luxuriant and all-pervading vegetation. If he is a poet or a painter, our wanderer will sit down, absorbed in the enjoyment of the perfect silence that reigns under the still sharp-cut vaulting of this side gate, whither no sound comes from the peaceful town, whence the rich country may be seen in all its beauty through loopholes, once held by archers and cross-bowmen, which seem placed like the little windows arranged to frame a view from a summer-house.

It is impossible to go through the town without being reminded at every step of the manners and customs of long past times; every stone speaks of them; traditions of the Middle Ages survive there as superstitions. If by chance a gendarme passes in his laced hat, his presence is an anachronism against which the mind protests; but nothing is rarer than to meet a being or a thing of the present. There is little to be seen even of the dress of the day; so much of it as the natives have accepted has become to some extent appropriate to their unchanging habits and hereditary physiognomy. The market-place is filled with Breton costumes, which artists come here to study, and which are amazingly varied. The whiteness of the linen clothes worn by the *paludiers,* the salt-workers who collect salt from the pans in the marshes, contrasts effectively with the blues and browns worn by the inland peasants, and the primitive jewelry piously preserved by the women. These two classes and the jacketed seamen, with their round varnished leather hats, are as distinct as the castes in India, and they still recognize the distinctions that separate the townsfolk, the clergy, and the nobility. Here every landmark still exists; the revolutionary plane found the divisions too rugged and too hard to work over; it would have been notched

if not broken. Here the immutability which Nature has given to zoological species is to be seen in men. In short, even since the revolution of 1830, Guérande is still a place unique, essentially Breton, fervently catholic, silent, meditative, where new ideas can scarcely penetrate.

Its geographical position accounts for this singularity. This pretty town overlooks the salt marshes; its salt is indeed known throughout Brittany as *Sel de Guérande,* and to its merits many of the natives ascribe the excellence of their butter and sardines. It has no communication with the rest of France but by two roads, one leading to Savenay, the chief town of the immediate district, and thence to Saint-Nazaire; and the other by Vannes on to Morbihan. The district road connects it with Nantes by land; that by Saint-Nazaire and then by boat also leads to Nantes. The inland road is used only by the Government, the shorter and more frequented. way is by Saint-Nazaire. Between that town and Guérande lies a distance of at least six leagues, which the mails do not serve, and for a very good reason—there are not three travelers by coach a year. Saint-Nazaire is divided from Paimbœuf by the estuary of the Loire, there four leagues in width. The bar of the river makes the navigation by steamboat somewhat uncertain; and to add to the difficulties, there was, in 1829, no landing quay at the cape of Saint-Nazaire; the point ended in slimy shoals and granite reefs, the natural fortifications of its picturesque church, compelling arriving voyagers to fling themselves and their baggage into boats when the sea was high, or, in fine weather, to walk across the rocks as far as the jetty then in course of construction. These obstacles, ill suited to invite the amateur, may perhaps still exist there. In the first place, the authorities move but slowly; and then the natives of this corner of land, which you may see projecting like a tooth on the map of France between Saint-Nazaire, le Bourg de Batz, and le Croisic, are very well content with the hindrances that protect their territory from the incursions of strangers.

Thus flung down on the edge of a continent, Guérande

leads no whither, and no one ever comes there. Happy in being unknown, the town cares only for itself. The centre of the immense produce of the salt marshes, paying not less than a million francs in taxes, is at le Croisic, a peninsular town communicating with Guérande across a tract of shifting sands, where the road traced each day is washed out each night, and by boats indispensable for crossing the inlet which forms the port of le Croisic, and which encroaches on the sand. Thus this charming little town is a Herculaneum of feudalism, *minus* the winding sheet of lava. It stands, but is not alive; its only reason for surviving is that it has not been pulled down.

If you arrive at Guérande from le Croisic, after crossing the tract of salt marshes, you are startled and excited at the sight of this immense fortification, apparently quite new. Coming on it from Saint-Nazaire, its picturesque position and the rural charm of the neighborhood are no less fascinating. The country round it is charming, the hedges full of flowers—honeysuckles, roses, and beautiful shrubs; you might fancy it was an English wild garden planned by a great artist. This rich landscape, so homelike, so little visited, with all the charm of a clump of violets or lily-of-the-valley found in the midst of a forest, is set in an African desert shut in by the ocean—a desert without a tree, without a blade of grass, without a bird, where, on a sunny day, the marsh-men, dressed all in white, and scattered at wide intervals over the dismal flats where the salt is collected, look just like Arabs wrapped in their burnouse. Indeed, Guérande, with its pretty scenery inland, and its desert bounded on the right by le Croisic and on the left by Batz, is quite unlike anything else to be seen by the traveler in France. The two types of nature so strongly contrasted and linked by this last monument of feudal life, are quite indescribably striking. The town itself has the effect on the mind that a soporific has on the body; it is as soundless as Venice.

There is no public conveyance but that of a carrier who transports travelers, parcels, and possibly letters, in a

wretched vehicle, from Saint-Nazaire to Guérande or back again. Bernus, the driver of this conveyance, was, in 1829, the factotum of the whole community. He goes as he likes, the whole country knows him, he does everybody's commissions. The arrival of a carriage is an immense event—some lady who is passing through Guérande by the land road to le Croisic, or a few old invalids on their way to take sea-baths, which among the rocks of this peninsula have virtues superior to those of Boulogne, Dieppe, or les Sables. The peasants come on horseback, and for the most part bring in their produce in sacks. They come hither chiefly, as do the salt makers, for the business of purchasing the jewelry peculiar to their caste, which must always be given to Breton maidens on betrothal, and the white linen or the cloth for their clothes. For ten leagues round, Guérande is still that illustrious Guérande where a treaty was signed famous in French history; the key of the coast, displaying no less than le Bourg de Batz, a magnificence now lost in the darkness of ages. The jewelry, the cloth, the linen, the ribbons, and hats are manufactured elsewhere, but to the purchasers they are the specialty of Guérande.

Every artist, nay, and every one who is not an artist, who passes through Guérande, feels a desire—soon forgotten—to end his days in its peace and stillness, walking out in fine weather on the mall that runs round the town from one gate to the other on the seaward side. Now and again a vision of this town comes to knock at the gates of memory; it comes in crowned with towers, belted with walls; it displays its robe strewn with lovely flowers, shakes its mantle of sand-hills, wafts the intoxicating perfumes of its pretty thorn-hedged lanes, decked with posies lightly flung together; it fills your mind, and invites you like some divine woman whom you have once seen in a foreign land, and who has made herself a home in your heart.

Close to the church of Guérande a house may be seen which is to the town what the town is to the country, an exact image

of the past, the symbol of a great thing now gone, a poem. This house belongs to the noblest family in the land—that of du Guaisnic, who, in the time of the du Guesclin, were as superior to them in fortune and antiquity as the Trojans were to the Romans. The Guaisqlain (also formerly spelt du Glaicquin)—which has become Guesclin—are descended from the Guaisnics. The Guaisnics, as old as the granite of Brittany, are neither Franks nor Gauls; they are Bretons, or, to be exact, Celts. Of old they must have been Druids, have cut the mistletoe in sacred groves, and have sacrificed men on dolmens. To-day this race, the equals of the Rohans, but never choosing to be made Princes, powerful in the land before Hugues Capet's ancestors had been heard of, this family, pure from every alloy, is possessed of about two thousand francs a year, this house at Guérande, and the little castle of le Guaisnic. All the estates belonging to the Barony of le Guaisnic, the oldest in Brittany, are in the hands of farmers, and bring in about sixty thousand francs a year in spite of defective culture. The du Guaisnics are indeed still the owners of the land; but as they cannot pay up the capital deposited with them two hundred years ago by those who then held them, they cannot take the income. They are in the position of the French Crown towards its tenants in 1789. When and where could the Barons find the million francs handed over to them by their farmers? Until 1789 the tenure of the fiefs held of the Castle of le Guaisnic, which stands on a hill, was still worth fifty thousand francs; but by a single vote the National Assembly suppressed the fines on leases and sales paid to the feudal lords. In such circumstances, this family, no longer of any consequence in France, would be a subject of ridicule in Paris; at Guérande it is an epitome of Brittany. At Guérande the Baron du Guaisnic is one of the great barons of France, one of the men above whom there is but one—the King of France, chosen of old to be their chief. In these days the name of du Guaisnic—full of local meanings, of which the etymology has been explained in *Les Chouans, or Brittany in 1799*—has undergone the same

change as disfigures that of du Guaisqlain. The tax-collector, like every one else, writes it Guénic.

At the end of a silent, damp, and gloomy alley, formed by the gabled fronts of the neighboring houses, the arch of a door in the wall may be seen, high and wide enough to admit a horseman, which is in itself sufficient evidence of the house having been finished at a time when carriages as yet were not. This arch, raised on jambs, is all of granite. The door, made of oak, has cracked like the bark of the trees that furnished the timber, and is set with enormous nails in a geometrical pattern. The arch is coved, and displays the coat-of-arms of the du Guaisnics, as sharp and clean-cut as though the carver had but just finished it. This shield would delight an amateur of heraldry by its simplicity, testifying to the pride and the antiquity of the family. It is still the same as on the day when the crusaders of the Christian world invented these symbols to know each other by; the Guaisnics have never quartered their bearings with any others. It is always true to itself, like the arms of France, which heralds may recognize borne in chief or quarterly in the coats of the oldest families. This is the blazon, as you still may see it at Guérande: Gules, a hand proper manched ermine holding a sword argent in pale, with this tremendous motto, *Fac.* Is not that a fine and great thing? The wreath of the baronial coronet surmounts this simple shield, on which the vertical lines used, instead of color, to represent *gules,* are still clear and sharp.

The sculptor has given an indescribable look of pride and chivalry to the hand. With what vigor does it hold the sword which has done the family service only yesterday! Indeed, if you should go to Guérande after reading this story, you will not look at that coat-of-arms without a thrill. The most determined Republican cannot fail to be touched by the fidelity, the nobleness, and the dignity buried at the bottom of that narrow street. The du Guaisnics did well yesterday; they are ready to do well to-morrow. *To do* is the great word of chivalry. "You did well in the fight," was always the

praise bestowed by the High Constable *par excellence,* the great du Guesclin, who for a while drove the English out of France. The depth of the carving, protected from the weather by the projecting curved margin of the arch, seems in harmony with the deeply graven moral of the motto in the spirit of this family. To those who know the Guaisnics this peculiarity is very pathetic.

The open door reveals a fairly large courtyard with stables to the right and kitchen offices to the left. The house is built of squared stone from cellar to garret. The front to the courtyard has a double flight of outside steps; the decorated landing at the top is covered with vestiges of sculpture much injured by time; but the eye of the antiquarian can still distinguish in the centrepiece of the principal ornament the hand holding the sword. Below this elegant balcony, graced with mouldings now broken in many places, and polished here and there by long use, is a little lodge, once occupied by a watch-dog. The stone balustrade is disjointed, and weeds, tiny flowers, and mosses sprout in the seams and on the steps, which ages have dislodged without destroying their solidity. The door into the house must have been pretty in its day. So far as the remains allow us to judge, it must have been wrought by an artist trained in the great Venetian school of the thirteenth century; it shows a singular combination of the Mauresque and Byzantine styles, and is crowned by a semicircular bracket, which is overgrown with plants, a posy of rose, yellow, brown, or blue, according to the season. The door, of nail-studded oak, opens into a vast hall, beyond which is a similar door leading to such another balcony, and steps down into the garden.

This hall is in wonderful preservation. The wainscot, up to the height of a man's elbow, is in chestnut wood; the walls above are covered with splendid Spanish leather stamped in relief, its gilding rubbed and rusty. The ceiling is coffered, artistically moulded, painted, and gilt, but the gold is scarcely visible; it is in the same condition as that on the Cordova leather; a few red flowers and green leaves can still be seen.

It seems probable that cleaning would revive the paintings, and show them to be like those which decorate the woodwork of the House at Tours, called *la Maison de Tristan,* which would prove that they had been restored or repaired in the time of Louis XI. The fireplace is enormous, of carved stone, with huge wrought-iron dogs of the finest workmanship. They would carry a cartload of logs. All the seats in this hall are of oak, and have the family shield carved on their backs. Hanging to nails on the wall are three English muskets, fit alike for war or for sport, three cavalry swords, two game-bags, and various tackle for hunting and fishing.

On one side is the dining-room, communicating with the kitchen by a door in a corner turret. This turret corresponds with another in the general design of the front, containing a winding-stair up to the two stories above. The dining-room is hung with tapestries dating from the fourteenth century; the style and spelling of the legends on ribbons below each figure prove their antiquity; but as they are couched in the frank language of the *Fabliaux,* they cannot be transcribed here. These pieces, which are well preserved in the corners where the light has not faded them, are set in frames of carved oak now as black as ebony. The ceiling is supported on beams carved with foliage, and all different; the flats between are of painted wood, wreaths of flowers on a blue ground. Two old dressers with cupboards face each other; and on the shelves, rubbed with Breton perseverance by Mariotte the cook, may be seen now—as at the time when kings were quite as poor in 1200 as the du Guaisnics in 1830—four old goblets, an ancient soup-tureen, and two salt-cellars in silver, a quantity of metal plates, a number of blue and gray stoneware jugs with arabesque designs and the du Guaisnic arms, and crowned with hinged metal lids.

The fireplace has been modernized; its state shows that since the last century this has been the family sitting-room. It is of carved stone in the Louis XV. style, surmounted by a mirror framed in a beaded and gilt moulding. This anachronism, to which the family is indifferent, would grieve a poet.

On the shelf, covered with red velvet, there stands in the middle a clock of tortoise-shell, inlaid with brass, flanked by a pair of silver candelabra of strange design. A large table on heavy twisted legs stands in the middle of the room; the chairs are of turned wood, covered with tapestry. A round table with a centre leg and claw carved to represent a vine-stock stands in front of the window to the garden, and on it stands a quaint lamp. This lamp is formed of a globe of common glass, rather smaller than an ostrich's egg, held in a candlestick by a glass knob at the bottom. From an opening at the top comes a flat wick in a sort of brass nozzle; the plait of cotton, curled up like a worm in a phial, is fed with nut oil from the glass vessel. The window looking out on the garden, like that on the courtyard—for they are alike—has stone mullions and hexagon panes set in lead; they are hung with curtains and valances, decorated with heavy tassels of an old-fashioned stuff—red silk shot with yellow, formerly known as brocatelle or damask.

Each floor of the house—there are but two below the attics—consists of only two rooms. The first floor was of old inhabited by the head of the family; the second was given up to the children; guests were lodged in the attic rooms. The servants were housed over the kitchens and stables. The sloping roof, leaded at every angle, has to the front and back alike a noble dormer window with a pointed arch, almost as high as the ridge of the roof, supported on graceful brackets; but the carving of the stone is worn and eaten by the salt vapor of the atmosphere. Above the windows, divided into four by mullions of carved stone, the aristocratic weather-cock still creaks as it veers.

A detail, precious by its originality, and not devoid of merit in the eyes of the archæologist, must not be overlooked. The turret containing the winding stairs finishes the angle of a broad gabled wall in which there is no window. The stairs go down to a small arched door, opening on a sandy plot dividing the house from the outer wall which forms the back of the stables. The turret is repeated at the corner of the

garden front; but instead of being circular, this turret has five angles and a hemispherical dome; also, it is crowned by a little belfry instead of carrying a conical cap like its sister. This is how those elegant architects lent variety to symmetry. On the level of the first floor these turrets are connected by a stone balcony, supported by brackets like prows with human heads. This outside gallery has a balustrade wrought with marvelous elegance and finish. Then from the top of the gable, below which there is a single small loophole, falls an ornamental stone canopy, like those which are seen over the heads of saints in a cathedral porch. Each turret has a pretty little doorway under a pointed arch, opening on to this balcony. Thus did the architects of the thirteenth century turn to account the bare, cold wall which is presented to us in modern times by the end section of a house.

Cannot you see a lady walking on this balcony in the morning, and looking out over Guérande to where the sun sheds a golden light on the sands, and is mirrored in the face of the ocean? Do you not admire this wall with its finial and gable, furnished at its corners with these reed-like turrets—one suddenly rounded off like a swallow's nest, the other displaying its little door and gothic arch decorated with the hand and sword?

The other end of the Hôtel du Guaisnic joins on to the next house.

The harmony of effect so carefully aimed at by the builders of that period is preserved in the front to the courtyard by the turret corresponding to that containing the winding stair or *vyse,* an old word derived from the French *vis.* It serves as a passage from the dining-room to the kitchen, but it ends at the first floor, and is capped by a little cupola on pillars covering a blackened statue of Saint Calixtus.

The garden is sumptuous within its ancient enclosure; it is more than half an acre in extent, and the walls are covered with fruit-trees; the square beds for vegetables are marked out by standards, and kept by a man-servant named Gasselin, who also takes charge of the horses. At the bottom of the

garden is an arbor with a bench under it. In the midst stands a sundial. The paths are graveled.

The garden front has no second turret to correspond with that at the corner of the gable; to make up for this there is a column with a spiral twist from bottom to top, which of old must have borne the standard of the family, for it ends in a large rusty iron socket in which lank weeds are growing. This ornament, harmonizing with the remains of stone-work, shows that the building was designed by a Venetian architect; this elegant standard is like a sign manual left by Venice, and revealing the chivalry and refinement of the thirteenth century. If there could still be any doubt, the character of the details would remove them. The trefoils of the Guaisnic house have four leaves. This variant betrays the Venetian school debased by its trade with the East, since the semi-Mauresque architects, indifferent to Catholic symbolism, gave the trefoil a fourth leaf, while Christian architects remained faithful to the emblem of the Trinity. From this point of view Venetian inventiveness was heretical.

If this house moves you to admiration, you will wonder, perhaps, why the present age never repeats these miracles of art. In our day such fine houses are sold and pulled down, and make way for streets. Nobody knows whether the next generation will keep up the ancestral home, where each one abides as in an inn; whereas formerly men labored, or at least believed that they labored, for an eternal posterity. Hence the beauty of their houses. Faith in themselves worked wonders, as much as faith in God.

With regard to the arrangement and furniture of the upper stories, they can only be imagined from this description of the ground floor, and from the appearance and habits of the family. For the last fifty years the du Guaisnics have never admitted a visitor into any room but these two, which, like the courtyard and the external features of the house, are redolent of the grace, the spirit, and the originality of the noble province of old Brittany.

Without this topography and description of the town,

without this detailed picture of their home, the singular figures of the family dwelling there might have been less well understood. The frame was necessarily placed before the portraits. Every one must feel that mere things have an effect on people. There are buildings whose influence is visible on the persons who live near them. It is difficult to be irreligious under the shadow of a cathedral like that of Bourges. The soul that is constantly reminded of its destiny by imagery finds it less easy to fall short of it. So thought our ancestors, but the opinion is no longer held by a generation which has neither symbols nor distinctions, while its manners change every ten years. Do you not expect to find the Baron du Guaisnic, sword in hand—or all this picture will be false?

In 1836, when this drama opens, in the early days of August, the family consisted still of Monsieur and Madame du Guénic, of Mademoiselle du Guénic, the Baron's elder sister, and of a son aged one-and-twenty, named Gaudebert-Calyste-Louis, in obedience to an old custom in the family. His father's name was Gaudebert-Calyste-Charles. Only the last name was ever changed; Saint-Gaudebert and Saint-Calixtus were always the patrons of the Guénics.

The Baron du Guénic had gone forth from Guérande as soon as la Vendée and Brittany had taken up arms, and he had fought with Charette, with Catelineau, La Rochejaquelein, d'Elbée, Bonchamps, and the Prince de Loudon. Before going, he had sold all his possessions to his elder sister, Mademoiselle Zéphirine du Guénic, a stroke of prudence unique in Revolutionary annals. After the death of all the heroes of the West, the Baron, preserved by some miracle from ending as they did, would not yield to Napoleon. He fought on till 1802, when, having narrowly escaped capture, he came back to Guérande, and from Guérande went to le Croisic, whence he sailed to Ireland—faithful to the traditional hatred of the Bretons for England.

The good people of Guérande pretended not to know that the Baron was alive; during twenty years not a word be-

trayed him. Mademoiselle du Guénic collected the rents, and sent the money to her brother through the hands of fishermen.

In 1813, Monsieur du Guénic came back to Guérande with as little fuss as if he had been spending the summer at Nantes. During his sojourn in Dublin, in spite of his fifty years, the Breton noble had fallen in love with a charming Irish girl, the daughter of one of the oldest and poorest houses of that unhappy country. Miss Fanny O'Brien was at that time one-and-twenty. The Baron du Guénic came to fetch the papers needed for his marriage, went back to be married, and returned ten months later, at the beginning of 1814, with his wife, who gave birth to a son on the very day when Louis XVIII. landed at Calais—which accounts for the name of Louis.

The loyal old man was now seventy-three years old, but the guerilla warfare against the Republic, his sufferings during five sea voyages in open boats, and his life at Dublin, had all told on him; he looked more than a hundred. Hence, never had there been a Guénic whose appearance was in more perfect harmony with the antiquity of the house built at a time when a Court was held at Guérande.

Monsieur du Guénic was a tall old man, upright, shriveled, strongly knit, and lean. His oval face was puckered by a thousand wrinkles, forming arched fringes above the cheekbones and eyebrows, giving his face some resemblance to those of the old men painted with such a loving brush by Van Ostade, Rembrandt, Miéris, and Gerard Dow—heads that need a magnifying glass to show their finish. His countenance was buried, as it were, under these numerous furrows produced by an open-air life, by the habit of scanning the horizon in the sunshine, at sunrise, and at the fall of day. But the sympathetic observer could still discern the imperishable forms of the human face, which always speak to the soul even when the eye sees no more than a death's head. The firm modeling of the features, the high brow, the sternness of outline, the severe nose, the form of the bones

which wounds alone can alter, expressed disinterested courage, boundless faith, implicit obedience, incorruptible fidelity, unchanging affection. In him the granite of Brittany was made man.

The Baron had no teeth. His lips, once red, but now blue, were supported only by the hardened gums with which he ate the bread his wife took care first to soften by wrapping it in a damp cloth, and they were sunk in his face while preserving a proud and threatening smile. His chin aimed at touching his nose; but the character of that nose—high in the middle—showed his Breton vigor and power of resistance. His complexion, marbled with red that showed through the wrinkles, was that of a full-blooded, high-tempered man, able to endure the fatigues which had often, no doubt, saved him from apoplexy. The head was crowned with hair as white as silver, falling in curls on his shoulders. This face, that seemed partly extinct, still lived by the brightness of a pair of black eyes, sparkling in their dark, sunken sockets, and flashing with the last fires of a generous and loyal soul. The eyebrows and eyelashes were gone. The skin had set, and would not yield; the difficulty of shaving compelled the old man to grow a fan-shaped beard.

What a painter would most have admired in this old lion of Brittany, with his broad shoulders and sinewy breast, was the hands, splendid soldier's hands—hands such as du Guesclin's must have been, broad, firm, and hairy; the hands that had seized the sword never to relinquish it—any more than Joan of Arc's—till the day when the royal standard floated in the Cathedral at Reims; hands that had often streamed with blood from the thorns of the *Bocage*—the thickets of la Vendée—that had pulled the oar in the Marais to steal upon the "blues," or on the open sea to help Georges to land; the hands of a partisan and of a gunner, of a private and of a captain; hands that were now white, though the Bourbons of the elder branch were in exile; but if you looked at them, you could see certain recent marks revealing that the Baron, not so long ago, had joined MADAME in la Vendée,

since the truth may now be told. These hands were a living commentary on the noble motto to which no Guénic had ever been false, *"Fac!"*

The forehead attracted attention by the golden tone on the temples, in contrast with the tan of that narrow, hard, set brow to which baldness had given height enough to add majesty to the noble ruin. The whole countenance, somewhat unintellectual it must be owned—and how should it be otherwise?—had, like the other Breton faces grouped about it, a touch of savagery, a stolid calm, like the impassibility of Huron Indians, an indescribable stupidity, due perhaps to the complete reaction that follows on excessive fatigue when the animal alone is left evident. Thought was rare there; it was visibly an effort; its seat was in the heart rather than the head; and its outcome was action rather than an idea. But on studying this fine old man with sustained attention, the mystery could be detected of this practical antagonism to the spirit of the age. His feelings and beliefs were, so to speak, intuitive, and saved him all thought. He had learnt his duties by dint of living. Religion and Institutions thought for him. Hence he and his kindred reserved their powers of mind for action, without frittering them on any of the things they thought useless, though others considered them important. He brought his thought out of his mind as he drew his sword from the scabbard, dazzling with rectitude like the hand in its ermine sleeve on his coat-of-arms. As soon as this secret was understood everything was clear. It explained the depth of the resolutions due to clear, definite, loyal ideas, as immaculate as ermine. It accounted for the sale to his sister before the war, though to him it had meant everything—death, confiscation, exile. The beauty of these two old persons' characters—for the sister lived only in and for her brother—cannot be fully appreciated by the selfish habits which lie at the root of the uncertainty and changefulness of our day. An archangel sent down to read their hearts would not have found in them a single thought bearing the stamp of self. In 1814, when the priest of

Guérande hinted to Baron du Guénic that he should go to Paris to claim his reward, the old sister, though avaricious for the family, exclaimed:

"Shame! Need my brother go begging like a vagrant?"

"It would be supposed that I had served the King from interested motives," said the old man. "Besides, it is his business to remember. And, after all, the poor King has enough to do with all who are harassing him. If he were to give France away piecemeal, he would still be asked for more."

This devoted servant, who cared so loyally for Louis XVIII., received a colonelcy, the Cross of Saint-Louis, and a pension of two thousand francs.

"The King has remembered!" he exclaimed, on receiving his letters patent.

No one undeceived him. The business had been carried through by the Duc de Feltre from the lists of the Army of la Vendée, in which he found the name of du Guénic with a few other Breton names ending in *ic*.

And so, in gratitude to the King, the Baron stood a siege at Guérande in 1815 against the forces of General Travot; he would not surrender the stronghold; and when he was compelled to evacuate, he made his escape into the woods with a party of Chouans, who remained under arms till the second return of the Bourbons. Guérande still preserves the memory of this last siege. If the old Breton trainbands had but joined, the war begun by this heroic resistance would have fired the whole of la Vendée.

It must be confessed that the Baron du Guénic was wholly illiterate—as illiterate as a peasant; he could read, write, and knew a little of arithmetic; he understood the art of war and heraldry; but he had not read three books in his life besides his prayer-book.

His dress, a not unimportant detail, was always the same; it consisted of heavy shoes, thick woolen stockings, velvet breeches of a greenish hue, a cloth waistcoat, and a coat with a high collar, on which hung the Cross of Saint-Louis.

Beautiful peace rested on his countenance, which, for a year

past, frequent slumber, the precursor of death, seemed to be preparing for eternal rest. This constant sleepiness, increasing day by day, did not distress his wife, nor his now blind sister, nor his friends, whose medical knowledge was not great. To them these solemn pauses of a blameless but weary soul were naturally accounted for—the Baron had done his duty. This told all.

In this house the predominant interest centred in the fate of the deposed elder branch. The future of the exiled Bourbons and the Catholic religion, and the influence of the new politics on Brittany, exclusively absorbed the Baron's family. No other interest mingled with these but the affection they all felt for the son of the house, Calyste, the heir and only hope of the great name of du Guénic. The old Vendéen, the old Chouan, had known a sort of renewal of his youth a few years since, to give his son the habit of those athletic exercises that befit a gentleman who may be called upon to fight at any moment. As soon as Calyste reached the age of sixteen, his father had gone out with him in the woods and marshes, teaching him by the pleasures of sport the rudiments of war, preaching by example, resisting fatigue, steadfast in the saddle, sure of his aim, whatever the game might be, ground game or birds, reckless in overcoming obstacles, inciting his son to face danger as though he had ten children to spare.

Then, when the Duchesse de Berry came to France to conquer the kingdom, the father carried off his son to make him act on the family motto. The Baron set out in the night without warning his wife, who might perhaps have displayed her emotion, leading his only child under fire as if it were to a festival, and followed by Gasselin, his only vassal, who rode forth gleefully. The three men of the house were away for six months, without sending any news to the Baroness—who never read the *Quotidienne* without quaking over every line—nor to her old sister-in-law, heroically upright, whose brow never flinched as she listened to the paper. So the three muskets hanging in the hall had seen service recently. The

Baron, in whose opinion this call to arms was unavailing, had left the field before the fight at la Penissière, otherwise the race of Guénic might have become extinct.

When, one night of dreadful weather, the father, son, and serving-man had reached home after taking leave of MADAME, surprising their friends, the Baroness, and old Mademoiselle du Guénic—though she, by a gift bestowed on all blind people, had recognized the steps of three men in the little street—the Baron looked round on the circle of his anxious friends gathered round the little table lighted up by the antique lamp, and merely said, in a quavering voice, while Gasselin hung up the muskets and swords in their place, these words of feudal simplicity:

"Not all the Barons did their duty."

Then he kissed his wife and sister, sat down in his old armchair, and ordered supper for his son, himself, and Gasselin. Gasselin, having screened Calyste with his body, had received a sabre cut on his shoulder; such a small matter, that he was scarcely thanked for it.

Neither the Baron nor his guests uttered a curse or a word of abuse of the conquerors. This taciturnity is a characteristically Breton trait. In forty years no one had ever heard a contemptuous speech from the Baron as to his adversaries. They could but do their business, as he did his duty. Such stern silence is an indication of immutable determination.

This last struggle, the flicker of exhausted powers, had resulted in the weakness under which the Baron was now failing. The second exile of the Bourbons, as miraculously ousted as they had been miraculously restored, plunged him in bitter melancholy.

At about six in the evening, on the day when the scene opens, the Baron, who, according to old custom, had done his dinner by four o'clock, had gone to sleep while listening to the reading of the *Quotidienne*. His head rested against the back of his armchair by the fireside, at the garden end.

The Baroness, sitting on one of the old chairs in front of

the fire, by the side of this gnarled trunk of an ancient tree, was of the type of those adorable women which exist nowhere but in England, Scotland, or Ireland. There only do we find girls kneaded with milk, golden-haired, with curls twined by angels' fingers, for the light of heaven seems to ripple over their tendrils with every air that fans them. Fanny O'Brien was one of those sylphs, strong in tenderness, invincible in misfortune, as sweet as the music of her voice, as pure as the blue of her eyes, elegantly lovely and refined, with the prettiness and the exquisite flesh—satin to the touch and a joy to the eye—that neither pencil nor pen can do justice to. Beautiful still at forty-two, many a man would have been happy to marry her as he looked at the charms of this glorious, richly-toned autumn, full of flower and fruit, and renewed by dews from heaven. The Baroness held the newspaper in a hand soft with dimples, and turned-up finger-tips with squarely-cut nails like those of an antique statue. She leaned back in her chair, without awkwardness or affectation, her feet thrust forward to get warm; and she wore a black velvet dress, for the wind had turned cold these last few days. The bodice, fitting tight to the throat, covered shoulders of noble outline and a bosom which had suffered no disfigurement from having nursed an only child. Her hair fell in ringlets on each side of her face, close to her cheeks, in the English fashion; a simple twist on the top of her head was held by a tortoise-shell comb; and the mass, instead of being of a doubtful hue, glittered in the light like threads of brownish gold. She had made a plait of the loose, short hairs that grow low down and are a mark of fine breeding. This tiny tress, lost in the rest of her hair that was combed high on her head, allowed the eye to note with pleasure the flowing line from her neck to her beautiful shoulders. This little detail shows the care she always gave to her toilet. She persisted in charming the old man's eye. What a delightful and touching attention!

When you see a woman lavishing in her home life the care for appearance which other women find for one feeling only,

you may be sure that she is a noble mother, as she is a noble wife, the joy and flower of the household; she understands her duties as a woman, the elegance of her appearance dwells in her soul and her affections, she does good in secret, she knows how to love truly without ulterior motives, she loves her neighbor as she loves God for Himself. And it really seemed as though the Virgin in Paradise, under whose protection she lived, had rewarded her chaste girlhood and saintly womanhood by the side of the noble old man by throwing over her a sort of glory that preserved her from the ravages of time.

Plato would perhaps have honored the fading of her beauty as so much added grace. Her skin, once so white, had acquired those warm and pearly tones that painters delight in. Her forehead, broad and finely moulded, seemed to love the light that played on it with sheeny touches. Her eyes of turquoise-blue gleamed with wonderful softness under light, velvety lashes. The drooping lids and pathetic temples suggested some unspeakable, silent melancholy; below the eyes her cheeks were dead white, faintly veined with blue to the bridge of the nose. The nose, aquiline and thin, had a touch of royal dignity, a reminder of her noble birth. Her lips, pure and delicately cut, were graced by a smile, the natural outcome of inexhaustible good humor. Her teeth were small and white. She had grown a little stout, but her shapely hips and slender waist were not disfigured by it; the autumn of her beauty displayed still some bright flowers forgotten by spring and the warmer glories of summer. Her finely moulded arms, her smooth, lustrous skin had gained a finer texture; the forms had filled out. And her open, serene countenance, with its faint color, the purity of her blue eyes, to which too rude a gaze would have been an offence, expressed unchanging gentleness, the infinite tenderness of the angels.

At the other side of the fireplace, in another armchair, sat the old sister of eighty, in every particular but dress the exact image of her brother; she listened to the paper while knitting stockings, for which sight is not needed. Her eyes

were darkened by cataract, and she obstinately refused to be operated on, in spite of her sister-in-law's entreaties. She alone knew the secret motive of her determination; she ascribed it to lack of courage, but in fact she did not choose that twenty-five louis should be spent on her; there would have been so much less in the house. Nevertheless, she would have liked to see her brother again. These two old people were an admirable foil to the Baroness' beauty. What woman would not have seemed young and handsome between Monsieur du Guénic and his sister?

Mademoiselle Zéphirine, deprived of sight, knew nothing of the changes that her eighty years had wrought in her looks. Her pallid, hollow face, to which the fixity of her white and sightless eyes gave a look of death, while three or four projecting teeth added an almost threatening expression; in which the deep eye-sockets were circled with red lines, and a few manly hairs, long since white, were visible on the chin and lips—this cold, calm face was framed in a little brown cotton hood quilted like a counterpane, edged with a cambric frill, and tied under her chin with ribbons that were never fresh. She wore a short upper skirt of stout cloth over a quilted petticoat, a perfect mattress, within which lurked double louis d'or; and she had pockets sewn to a waistband, which she took off at night and put on in the morning as a garment. Her figure was wrapped in the usual jacket bodice of Breton women, made of cloth like the skirt, and finished with a close pleated frill, of which the washing formed the only subject of difference between her and the Baroness; she insisted on changing it but once a week. Out of the wadded sleeves of this jacket came a pair of withered but sinewy arms, and two ever-busy hands, somewhat red, which made her arms look as white as poplar wood. These fingers, claw-like from the contraction induced by the habit of knitting, were like a stocking-machine in constant motion; the wonder would have been to see them at rest. Now and then Mademoiselle du Guénic would take one of the long knitting needles darned into the bosom of her dress, and push it in

under her hood among her white hairs. A stranger would have laughed to see how calmly she stuck it in again, without any fear of pricking herself. She was as upright as a steeple; her columnar rigidity might be regarded as one of those old women's vanities which prove that pride is a passion indispensable to vitality. She had a bright smile; she too had done her duty.

As soon as Fanny saw that the Baron was asleep, she ceased reading. A sunbeam shot across from window to window, cutting the atmosphere of the old room in two by a band of gold, and casting a glory on the almost blackened furniture. The light caught the carvings of the cornice, fluttered over the cabinets, spread a shining face over the oak table, and gave cheerfulness to this softly sombre room, just as Fanny's voice brought to the old woman's spirit a harmony as luminous and gay as the sunbeam. Ere long the rays of the sun assumed a reddish glow, which by insensible degrees sank to the melancholy hues of dusk. The Baroness fell into serious thought, one of those spells of perfect silence which her old sister-in-law had noticed during a fortnight past, trying to account for them without questioning the Baroness in any way; but she was studying the causes of this absence of mind as only blind people can, who read, as it were, a black book with white letters, while every sound rings through their soul as though it were an oracular echo. The old blind woman, to whom the falling darkness now meant nothing, went on knitting, and the silence was so complete that the tick of her steel knitting needles could be heard.

"You have dropped the paper—but you are not asleep, sister," said the old woman sagaciously.

It was now dark; Mariotte came in to light the lamp, and placed it on a square table in front of the fire; then she fetched her distaff, her hank of flax, and a little stool, and sat down to spin in the window recess on the side towards the courtyard, as she did every evening. Gasselin was still busy in the outbuildings, attending to the Baron's horse and that of Calyste, seeing that all was right in the stables, and

giving the two fine hounds their evening meal. The glad barking of these two creatures was the last sound that roused the echoes lurking in the dark walls of the house.

These two horses and two dogs were the last remains of the splendor of chivalry. An imaginative man, sitting on the outer steps, and abandoning himself to the poetry of the images still living in this dwelling, might have been startled at hearing the dogs and the tramping hoofs of the neighing steeds.

Gasselin was one of the short, sturdy, square-built Breton race, with black hair and tanned faces, silent, slow, as stubborn as mules, but always going on the road marked out for them. He was now two-and-forty, and had lived in the house twenty-five years. Mademoiselle had engaged Gasselin as servant when he was fifteen, on hearing of the Baron's marriage and probable return. This henchman considered himself a member of the family. He had played with Calyste, he loved the horses and dogs, and talked to them and petted them as though they were his own. He wore a short jacket of blue linen with little pockets that flapped over his hips, and a waistcoat and trousers of the same material, in all seasons alike, blue stockings and hobnailed shoes. When the weather was very cold or wet, he added the goatskin with the hair on, worn in his province.

Mariotte, who was also past forty, was as a woman exactly what Gasselin was as a man. Never did a better pair run in harness; the same color, the same figure, the same small, sharp black eyes. It was hard to imagine why Mariotte and Gasselin had never married; but it might have been criminal; they almost seemed like brother and sister. Mariotte had thirty crowns a year in wages, and Gasselin a hundred livres; but not for a thousand francs a year would they have quitted the house of the Guénics. They were both under the jurisdiction of old Mademoiselle, who had been in the habit of managing the house from the time of the war in la Vendée till her brother's return. Hence she had been greatly upset on hearing that her brother was bringing home a mistress of the

house, supposing that she would have to lay down the domestic sceptre in favor of the Baronne du Guénic, whose first subject she would then be.

Mademoiselle Zéphirine had been very agreeably surprised on finding that Miss Fanny O'Brien was born to a lofty position, a girl who detested the minute cares of housekeeping, and who, like all noble souls, would have preferred dry bread from the bakers to any food she had to prepare herself; capable of fulfilling all the duties of motherhood, strong to endure every necessary privation, but without energy for commonplace industry. When the Baron, in the name of his shrinking wife, begged his sister to rule the house, the old maid embraced the Baroness as her sister; she made a daughter of her, she adored her, happy in being allowed to continue her care of governing the house, and keeping it with incredible rigor and most economical habits, which she relaxed only on great occasions, such as her sister-in-law's confinement and feeding, and everything that could affect Calyste, the worshiped son of the house.

Though the two servants were accustomed to this strict rule, and needed no telling; though they took more care of their master's interests than of their own, still Mademoiselle Zéphirine had an eye on everything. Her attention having nothing to divert it, she was the woman to know without going to look, how large the pile of walnuts should be in the loft, and how much corn was left in the stable-bin without plunging her sinewy arm into its depths. She wore a boatswain's whistle attached by a string to her waistband, and called Mariotte by whistling once, and Gasselin by whistling twice. Gasselin's chief happiness consisted in cultivating the garden and raising fine fruit and good vegetables. He had so little to do that but for his gardening he would have been bored to death. When he had groomed the horses in the morning he polished the floors, and cleaned the two ground-floor rooms; he had little to do for his masters. So in the garden you could not have found a weed or a noxious insect. Sometimes Gasselin might be seen standing motionless and

bareheaded in the sunshine, watching for a field-rat or the dreadful larvæ of the cockchafer; then he would rush in with a child's glee to show the master the creature he had spent a week in catching. On fast days it was his delight to go to le Croisic to buy fish, cheaper there than at Guérande.

Never was there a family more united, on better terms, or more inseparable, than this pious and noble household. Masters and servants seemed to have been made for each other. In five-and-twenty years there had never been a trouble or a discord. The only sorrows they had known were the child's little ailments, and the only anxieties had come of the events of 1814, and again of 1830. If the same things were invariably done at the same hours, if the food varied only with the changes of the seasons, this monotony, like that of nature, with its alternation of cloud, rain, and sunshine, was made endurable by the affection that filled every heart, and was all the more helpful and beneficent because it was the outcome of natural laws.

When twilight was ended, Gasselin came into the room and respectfully inquired whether he were wanted.

"After prayers you can go out, or go to bed," said the Baron, rousing himself, "unless Madame or my sister——"

The two ladies nodded agreement. Gasselin, seeing them all rise to kneel on their chairs, fell on his knees. Mariotte knelt on her stool. Old Mademoiselle du Guénic said prayers aloud.

As she finished, a knock was heard at the outer gate. Gasselin went to open it.

"It is Monsieur le Curé, no doubt; he is almost always the first," remarked Mariotte.

And, in fact, they all recognized the footstep of the parish priest on the resonant steps to the balcony entrance. The Curé bowed respectfully to the three, addressing the Baron and the two ladies with the unctuous civility that a priest has at his command. In reply to an absent-minded "Good-evening" from the mistress of the house, he gave her a look of priestly scrutiny.

"Are you uneasy, madame, or unwell?" he asked.

"Thank you, no!" said she.

Monsieur Grimont, a man of about fifty, of middle height, wrapped in his gown, beneath which a pair of thick shoes with silver buckles were visible, showed above his bands a fat face, on the whole fair, but sallow. His hands were plump. His abbot-like countenance had something of the Dutch burgomaster in its calm complexion and the tones of the flesh, and something, too, of the Breton peasant in its straight black hair and sparkling black eyes, which nevertheless were under the control of priestly decorum. His cheerfulness, like that of all people whose conscience is calm and pure, consented to jest. There was nothing anxious or forbidding in his look, as in that of those unhappy priests whose maintenance or power is disputed by their parishioners, and who instead of being, as Napoleon so grandly said, the moral leaders of the people and natural justices of the peace, are regarded as enemies. The most unbelieving of strangers who should see Monsieur Grimont walking through Guérande would have recognized him as the sovereign of the Catholic town; but this sovereign abdicated his spiritual rule before the feudal supremacy of the du Guénic family. In this drawing-room he was as a chaplain in the hall of his liege. In church, as he gave the blessing, his hand always turned first towards the chapel of the House, where their hand and sword and their motto were carved on the keystone of the vaulting.

"I thought that Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël was here," said the Curé, seating himself, as he kissed the Baroness' hand. "She is losing her good habits. Is the fashion for dissipation spreading? For I observe that Monsieur le Chevalier is at les Touches again this evening."

"Say nothing of his visits there before Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël," exclaimed the old lady in an undertone.

"Ah! mademoiselle," Mariotte put in, "how can you keep the whole town from talking?"

"And what do they say?" asked the Baroness.

"All the girls and the old gossips—everybody, in short—is saying that he is in love with Mademoiselle des Touches."

"A young fellow so handsome as Calyste is only following his calling by making himself loved," said the Baron.

"Here is Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël," said Mariotte.

The gravel in the courtyard was, in fact, heard to crunch under this lady's deliberate steps, heralded by a lad bearing a lantern. On seeing this retainer, Mariotte transferred her stool and distaff to the large hall, where she could chat with him by the light of the rosin candle that burned at the cost of the rich and stingy old maid, thus saving her master's.

Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël was a slight, thin woman, as yellow as the parchment of an archive, and wrinkled like a lake swept by the wind, with gray eyes, large, prominent teeth, and hands like a man's; she was short, certainly crooked, and perhaps even hump-backed; but no one had ever been curious to study her perfections or imperfections. Dressed in the same style as Mademoiselle du Guénic, she made quite a commotion in a huge mass of petticoats and frills when she tried to find one of the two openings in her gown by which she got at her pockets; the strangest clinking of keys and money was then heard from beneath these skirts. All the iron paraphernalia of a good housewife was to be found on one side, and on the other her silver snuff-box, her thimble, her knitting, and other jangling objects.

Instead of the quilted hood worn by Mademoiselle du Guénic, she had a green bonnet, which she no doubt wore when she went to look at her melons; like them, it had faded from green to yellow, and as for its shape, fashion has lately revived it in Paris under the name of *Bibi*. This bonnet was made under her own eye by her nieces, of green sarcenet purchased at Guérande, on a shape she bought new every five years at Nantes—for she allowed it the life of an administration. Her nieces also made her gowns, cut by an immemorial pattern. The old maid still used the crutch-handled cane which ladies carried at the beginning of the reign of Marie-Antoinette. She was of the first nobility of Brittany. On her shield figured the ermines of the ancient duchy; the illustrious Breton house of Pen-Hoël ended in her and her sister.

This younger sister had married a Kergarouët, who, in spite of the disapprobation of the neighbors, had added the name of Pen-Hoël to his own, and called himself the Vicomte de Kergarouët-Pen-Hoël.

"Heaven has punished him," the old maid would say. "He has only daughters, and the name of Kergarouët-Pen-Hoël will become extinct."

Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël enjoyed an income of about seven thousand francs from land. For thirty-six years, since she had come of age, she herself had managed her estates; she rode out to inspect them, and on every point displayed the firmness of will characteristic of deformed persons. Her avarice was the amazement of all for ten leagues round, but viewed with no disapprobation. She kept one woman servant and this lad; all her expenditure, not inclusive of taxes, did not come to more than a thousand francs a year. Hence she was the object of the most flattering attentions from the Kergarouët-Pen-Hoëls, who spent the winter at Nantes, and the summer at their country-house on the banks of the Loire just below Indret. It was known that she intended to leave her fortune and her savings to that one of her nieces whom she might prefer. Every three months one of the four Demoiselles de Kergarouët came to spend a few days with her.

Jacqueline de Pen-Hoël, a great friend of Zéphirine du Guénic's, and brought up in the faith and fear of the Breton dignity of the Guénics, had conceived a plan, since Calyste's birth, of securing her wealth to this youth by getting him to marry one of these nieces, to be bestowed on him by the Vicomtesse de Kergarouët-Pen-Hoël. She proposed to repurchase some of the best land for the Guénics by paying off the farmers' loans. When avarice has an end in view, it ceases to be a vice; it is the instrument of virtue; its stern privations become a constant sacrifice; in short, it has greatness of purpose concealed beneath its meanness. Zéphirine was perhaps in Jacqueline's secret. Perhaps, too, the Baroness, whose whole intelligence was absorbed in love for her son and tender

care for his father, may have guessed something when she saw with what pertinacious perseverance Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël would bring with her, day after day, Charlotte de Kergarouët, her favorite niece, now fifteen. The priest, Monsieur Grimont, was undoubtedly in her confidence; he helped the old lady to invest her money well. But if Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël had had three hundred thousand francs in gold—the sum at which her savings were commonly estimated; if she had had ten times more land than she owned, the du Guénics would never have allowed themselves to pay her such attention as might lead the old maid to fancy that they were thinking of her fortune. With an admirable instinct of truly Breton pride, Jacqueline de Pen-Hoël, gladly accepting the supremacy assumed by her old friends Zéphirine and the du Guénics, always expressed herself honored by a visit when the descendant of Irish Kings and Zéphirine condescended to call on her. She went so far as to conceal with care the little extravagance which she winked at every evening by permitting her boy to burn an *oribus* at the du Guénics,—the ginger-bread colored candle which is commonly used in various districts in the West. This rich old maid was indeed aristocracy, pride, and dignity personified.

At the moment when the reader is studying her portrait, an indiscretion on the part of the Curé had betrayed the fact that, on the evening when the old Baron, the young Chevalier, and Gasselin stole away armed with swords and fowling-pieces to join MADAME in la Vendée—to Fanny's extreme terror, and to the great joy of the Bretons—Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël had placed in the Baron's hands a sum of ten thousand francs in gold, an immense sacrifice, supplemented by ten thousand francs more, the fruits of a tithe collected by the Curé, which the old partisan was requested to lay at the feet of Henry V.'s mother, in the name of the Pen-Hoëls and of the parish of Guérande.

Meanwhile, she treated Calyste with the airs of a woman who believes she is in her rights; her schemes justified her in keeping an eye on him; not that she was strait-laced in

her ideas as to questions of gallantry—she had all the indulgence of a woman of the old regime; but she had a horror of Revolutionary manners. Calyste, who might have risen in her esteem by intrigues with Breton women, would have fallen immensely if she had taken up what she called the newfangled ways. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, who would have unearthed a sum of money to pay off a girl he had seduced, would have regarded Calyste as a reckless spendthrift if she had seen him driving a tilbury, or heard him talk of setting out for Paris. And if she had found him reading some impious review or newspaper, it is impossible to imagine what she might have done. To her, new notions meant the rotation of crops, sheer ruin under the guise of improvements and method, lands ultimately mortgaged as a result of experiments. To her, thrift was the real way to make a fortune; good management consisted in filling her outhouses with buckwheat, rye, and hemp, in waiting for prices to rise at the risk of being known to force the market, and in resolutely hoarding her corn-sacks. As it happened, strangely enough, she had often met with good bargains that confirmed her in her principles. She was thought cunning, but she was not really clever; she had only the methodical habits of a Dutch woman, the caution of a cat, the pertinacity of a priest; and this, in a land of routine, was as good as the deepest perspicacity.

"Shall we see Monsieur du Halga this evening?" asked Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, taking off her knitted worsted mittens after exchanging the usual civilities.

"Yes, mademoiselle, I saw him airing his dog in the Mall," replied the Curé.

"Then our *mouche* will be lively this evening," said she. "We were but four last night."

On hearing the word *mouche,* the priest rose, and brought out of a drawer of one of the cabinets a small, round basket of fine willow, some ivory counters as yellow as Turkish tobacco, from twenty years' service, and a pack of cards as greasy as those of the custom-house officers of Saint-Nazaire, who only have a new pack once a fortnight. The Abbé him-

self sorted out the proper number of counters for each player, and put the basket by the lamp in the middle of the table, with childish eagerness and the manner of a man accustomed to fulfil this little task. A loud rap in military style presently echoed through the silent depths of the old house. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël's little servant went solemnly to open the gate. Before long, the tall, lean figure of the Chevalier du Halga, formerly flag-captain under Admiral de Kergarouët, was seen, carefully dressed to suit the season, a black object in the dusk that still prevailed outside.

"Come in, Chevalier," cried Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël.

"The altar is prepared!" said the priest.

De Halga, whose health was poor, wore flannel for the rheumatism, a black silk cap to protect his head against the fog, and a spencer to guard his precious chest from the sudden blasts of wind that refresh the atmosphere of Guérande. He always went about armed with a rattan to drive off dogs when they tried to make inopportune love to his own, which was a lady. This man, as minutely particular as any fine lady, put out by the smallest obstacles, speaking low to spare the voice remaining to him, had been in his day one of the bravest and most capable officers of the King's navy. He had been honored with the confidence of the Bailli de Suffren, and the Comte de Portenduère's friendship. His valor, as captain of Admiral de Kergarouët's flagship, was scored in legible characters on his face, seamed with scars. No one, on looking at him, could have recognized the voice that had roared down the storm, the eye that had swept the horizon, the indomitable courage of a Breton seaman. He did not smoke, he never swore; he was as gentle and quiet as a girl, and devoted himself to his dog Thisbe and her various little whims with the absorption of an old woman. He gave every one a high idea of his departed gallantry. He never spoke of the startling acts which had amazed the Comte d'Estaing.

Though he stooped like a pensioner, and walked as though he feared to tread on eggs at every step, though he complained of a cool breeze, of a scorching sun, of a damp fog,

he displayed fine white teeth set in red gums, which were reassuring as to his health; and, indeed, his complaint must have been an expensive one, for it consisted in eating four meals a day of monastic abundance. His frame, like the Baron's, was large-boned and indestructibly strong, covered with parchment stretched tightly over the bones, like the coat of an Arab horse that shines in the sun over its sinews. His complexion had preserved the tanned hue it had acquired in his voyages to India, but he had brought back no ideas and no reminiscences. He had emigrated; he had lost all his fortune; then he had recovered the Cross of Saint-Louis and a pension of two thousand francs, legitimately earned by his services, and paid out of the fund for naval pensions. The harmless hypochondria that led him to invent a thousand imaginary ailments was easily accounted for by his sufferings during the emigration. He had served in the Russian navy till the day when the Emperor Alexander wanted him to serve against France; he then retired and went to live at Odessa, near the Duc de Richelieu, with whom he came home, and who procured the payment of the pension due to this noble wreck of the old Breton navy.

At the death of Louis XVIII. he came home to Guérande, and was chosen mayor of the town. The Curé, the Chevalier, and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël had been for fifteen years in the habit of spending their evenings at the Hôtel du Guénic, whither also came a few persons of good family from the town and immediate neighborhood. It is easy to see that the Guénic family were the leaders of this little Faubourg Saint-Germain of the district, into which no official was admitted who had been appointed to his post by the new Government. For six years past the Curé invariably coughed at the critical words of *Domine, salvum fac regem.* Politics always stuck at that point in Guérande.

Mouche (a sort of loo) is a game played with five cards in each hand and a turn-up. The turned-up card decides the trumps. At every fresh deal each player is at liberty to play

or to retire. If he throws away his hand, he loses only his deposit; for as long as no fines have been paid into the pool, each player must contribute to it. Those who play must make a trick, paid for in proportion to the contents of the pool; if there are five sous in the trick, he pays one sou. The player who fails to pay is *looed;* he then owes as much as the pool contains, which increases it for the following deal. The fines due are written down; they are added to the pools one after another in diminishing order, the heaviest before the lesser sums. Those who decline to play show their cards during the play, but they count for nothing. The players may discard and draw from the pack, as at *écarté,* in order of seniority. Each player may change as many cards as he likes, so the eldest and the second hands may use up the pack between them. The turned-up card belongs to the dealer, who is the youngest hand; he has a right to exchange it for any card in his own hand. One terrible card takes all others, and is known as *mistigris;* mistigris is the knave of clubs. This game, though so excessively simple, is not devoid of interest. The covetousness natural to man finds scope in it, as well as some diplomatic finessing and play of expression.

At the Hôtel du Guénic each player purchased twenty counters for five sous, by which the stake amounted to five liards each deal, an important sum in the eyes of these gamblers. With very great luck a player might win fifty sous, more than any one in Guérande spent in a day. And Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël came to this game—of which the simplicity is unsurpassed in the nomenclature of the Academy, unless by that of Beggar my Neighbor—with an eagerness as great as that of a sportsman at a great hunting party. Mademoiselle Zéphirine, who was the Baroness' partner, attached no less importance to the game of *mouche.* To risk a liard for the chance of winning five, deal after deal, constituted a serious financial speculation to the thrifty old woman, and she threw herself into it with as much moral energy as the greediest speculator puts into gambling on the Bourse for the rise and fall of shares.

By a diplomatic convention, dating from September, 1825, after a certain evening when Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël had lost thirty-seven sous, the game was ended as soon as any one expressed a wish to that effect after losing ten sous. Politeness would not allow of a player being put to the little discomfort of looking on at the game without taking part in it. But every passion has its jesuitical side. The Chevalier du Halga and the Baron, two old politicians, had found a way of evading the act. When all the players were equally eager to prolong an exciting game, the brave Chevalier, one of those bachelors who are prodigal and rich by the expenses they save, always offered to lend Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël or Mademoiselle Zéphirine ten counters when either of them had lost her five sous, on the understanding that she should repay them if she should win. An old bachelor might allow himself such an act of gallantry to the unmarried ladies. The Baron also would offer the old maids ten counters, under pretence of not stopping the game. The avaricious old women always accepted, not without some pressing, after the usage and custom of old maids. But to allow themselves such a piece of extravagance, the Baron and the Chevalier must first have won, otherwise the offer bore the character of an affront.

This game was in its glory when a young Mademoiselle de Kergarouët was on a visit to her aunt—Kergarouët only, for the family had never succeeded in getting itself called Kergarouët-Pen-Hoël by anybody here, not even by the servants, who had indeed peremptory orders on this point. The aunt spoke of the *mouche* parties at the du Guénics' as a great treat. The girl was enjoined to make herself agreeable—an easy matter enough when she saw the handsome Calyste, on whom the four young ladies all doted. These damsels, brought up in the midst of modern civilization, thought little of five sous, and paid fine after fine. Then fines would be scored up to a total sometimes of five francs, on a scale ranging from two sous and a half up to ten sous. These were evenings of intense excitement to the old blind woman. The

tricks were called *mains* (or hands) at Guérande. The Baroness would press her foot on her sister-in-law's as many times as she had, as she believed, tricks in her hand. The question of play or no play on occasions when the pool was full led to secret struggles in which covetousness contended with alarms. The players would ask each other, "Are you coming in?" with feelings of envy of those who had good enough cards to tempt fate, and spasms of despair when they were forced to retire.

If Charlotte de Kergarouët, who was commonly thought foolhardy, was lucky in her daring when her aunt had won nothing, she was treated with coldness when they got home, and had a little lecture: "She was too decided and forward; a young girl ought not to challenge persons older than herself; she had an overbold manner of seizing the pool, or declaring to play; a young person should show more reserve and modesty in her manners; it was not seemly to laugh at the misfortunes of others," and so forth.

Then perennial jests, repeated a thousand times a year, but always fresh, turned on the carriage of the basket when the pool overfilled it. They must get oxen to draw it, elephants, horses, asses, dogs. And at the end of twenty years no one noticed the staleness of the joke; it always provoked the same smile. It was the same thing with the remarks caused by the annoyance of seeing a pool taken from those who had helped to fill it and got nothing out. The cards were dealt with automatic slowness. They talked in chest-tones. And these respectable and high-born personages were so delightfully mean as to suspect each other's play. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël almost always accused the Curé of cheating when he won a pool.

"But what is so odd," the Curé would say, "is that I never cheat when I am fined."

No one laid down a card without profound meditation, without keen scrutiny, and more or less astute hints, ingenious and searching remarks. The deals were interrupted, you may be sure, by gossip as to what was going on in the town, or

discussions on politics. Frequently the players would pause for a quarter of an hour, their cards held in a fan against their chest, absorbed in talk. Then, if after such an interruption a counter was short in the pool, everybody was certain that his or her counter was not missing; and generally it was the Chevalier who made up the loss, under general accusations of thinking of nothing but the singing in his ears, his headache, or his fads, and of forgetting to put in. As soon as he had paid up a counter, old Zéphirine or the cunning hunchback was seized with remorse; they then fancied that perhaps the fault was theirs; they thought, they doubted; but, after all, the Chevalier could afford the little loss! The Baron often quite forgot what he was about when the misfortunes of the Royal family came under discussion.

Sometimes the game resulted in a way that was invariably a surprise to the players, who each counted on being the winner. After a certain number of rounds each had won back his counters, and went away, the hour being late, without loss or profit, but not without excitement. On these depressing evenings the *mouche* was abused; it had not been interesting; the players accused the game, as negroes beat the reflection of the moon in water when the weather is bad. The evening had been dull; they had toiled so hard for so little.

When, on their first visit, the Vicomte de Kergarouët and his wife spoke of whist and boston as games more interesting than *mouche,* and were encouraged to teach them by the Baroness, who was bored to death by *mouche,* the company lent themselves to the innovation, not without strong protest; but it was impossible to make these games understood; and as soon as the Kergarouëts had left, they were spoken of as overwhelmingly abstruse, as algebraical puzzles, and incredibly difficult. They all preferred their beloved *mouche,* their unpretentious little *mouche.* And *mouche* triumphed over the modern games, as old things constantly triumph over new in Brittany.

While the Curé dealt the cards, the Baroness was asking

the Chevalier du Halga the same questions as she had asked the day before as to his health. The Chevalier made it a point of honor to have some new complaint. Though the questions were always the same, the Captain had a great advantage in his replies. To-day his false ribs had been troubling him. The remarkable thing was that the worthy man never complained of his wounds. Everything serious he was prepared for, he understood it; but fantastic ailments—pains in his head, dogs devouring his inside, bells ringing in his ears, and a thousand other crotchets worried him greatly; he set up as an incurable, with all the more reason that physicians know no remedy for maladies that are non-existent.

"Yesterday, I fancy you had pains in your legs?" said the Curé very seriously.

"They move about," replied du Halga.

"Legs in your false ribs?" asked Mademoiselle Zéphirine.

"And made no halt on the way?" said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël with a smile.

The Chevalier bowed gravely, with a negative shake of the head, not without fun in it, which would have proved to an observer that in his youth the seaman must have been witty, loved, and loving. His fossilized life at Guérande covered perhaps many memories. As he stood planted on his heron legs in the sun, stupidly watching the sea, or his dog sporting on the Mall, perhaps he was alive again in the Earthly Paradise of a past rich in remembrance.

"So the old Duc de Lenoncourt is dead!" said the Baron, recalling the passage in the *Quotidienne* at which his wife had stopped. "Well, well, the first gentleman-in-waiting had not long to wait before following his master. I shall soon go too."

"My dear! my dear!" said his wife, gently patting his lean and bony hand.

"Let him talk, sister," said Zéphirine. "So long as I am above ground, he will not go under ground. He is younger than I am."

A cheerful smile brightened the old woman's face when

the Baron dropped a reflection of this kind, the players and callers would look at each other anxiously, grieved to find the King of Guérande out of spirits. Those who had come to see him would say as they went away, "Monsieur du Guénic is much depressed; have you noticed how much he sleeps?" And next day all Guérande would be talking of it: "The Baron du Guénic is failing." The words began the conversation in every house in the place.

"And is Thisbe well?" asked Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël as soon as the deal was over.

"The poor little beast is like me," said the Chevalier. "Her nerves are out of order; she is always holding up one of her legs as she runs.—Like this."

And in showing how Thisbe ran, by bending his arm as he raised it, the Chevalier allowed his neighbor, Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, to see his cards; she wanted to know whether he had trumps or *mistigris.* This was a first finesse to which he fell a prey.

"Oh!" exclaimed the Baroness, "the tip of Monsieur le Curé's nose has turned pale, he must have mistigris!"

The joy of having mistigris was so great to the Curé, as to all the players, that the poor priest could not disguise it. There is in each human face some spot where every secret emotion of the heart betrays itself; and these good people, accustomed to watch each other, had, after the lapse of years, discovered the weak place in the Curé—when he had mistigris the tip of his nose turned white. Then they all took care not to play.

"You have had visitors to-day?" said the Chevalier to Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël.

"Yes; one of my brother-in-law's cousins. He surprised me by telling me of the intended marriage of Madame la Comtesse de Kergarouët, a demoiselle de Fontaine——"

"A daughter of Grand-Jacques!" exclaimed du Halga, who during his stay in Paris had never left his Admiral's side.

"The Countess inherits everything; she has married a man who was ambassador.—He told me the most extraordinary

things about our neighbor, Mademoiselle des Touches; so extraordinary, that I will not believe them. Calyste could never be so attentive to her; he has surely enough good sense to perceive such monstrosities."

"Monstrosities!" said the Baron, roused by the word.

The Baroness and the priest looked meaningly at each other. The cards were dealt. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël had mistigris; she did not want to continue the conversation, but was glad to cover her delight under the general amazement caused by this word.

"It is your turn to lead, Monsieur le Baron," said she, bridling.

"My nephew is not one of those young men who like monstrosities," said Zéphirine, poking her knitting-pin through her hair.

"Mistigris!" cried Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, without answering her friend.

The Curé, who appeared fully informed as to all that concerned Calyste and Mademoiselle des Touches, did not enter the lists.

"What does she do that is so extraordinary, this Mademoiselle des Touches?" asked the Baron.

"She smokes," said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël.

"It is very wholesome," said the Chevalier.

"Her bacon?" asked the Baron.

"Her bacon! She does not save it," retorted the old maid.

"Every one played, and every one is looed; I have the king, queen, and knave of trumps, mistigris, and a king," said the Baroness. "The pool is ours, sister."

This stroke, won without play, overwhelmed Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, who thought no more of Calyste and Mademoiselle des Touches. At nine o'clock no one remained in the room but the Baroness and the Curé. The four old people had gone away and to bed.

The Chevalier, as usual, escorted Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël to her own house in the Market Place, making remarks on the skill of the last player, on their good or ill luck, or on the

ever-new glee with which Mademoiselle Zéphirine's pocket engulfed her winnings, for the old blind woman made no attempt now to disguise the expression of her sentiments in her face. Madame du Guénic's absence of mind was their subject to-night. The Chevalier had observed the charming Irishwoman's inattention to the game. On the doorstep, when her boy had gone upstairs, the old lady replied in confidence to the Chevalier's guesses as to the Baroness' strange manner by these words, big with importance:

"I know the reason; Calyste is done for if he is not soon married. He is in love with Mademoiselle des Touches—an actress!"

"In that case, send for Charlotte."

"My sister shall hear from me to-morrow," said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, bidding him good-night.

From this study of a normal evening, the commotion may be imagined that was produced in the home circles of Guérande by the arrival, the stay, the departure, or even the passing through of a stranger.

When not a sound was audible in the Baron's room or in his sister's, Madame du Guénic turned to the priest, who was pensively playing with the counters.

"I see that you at last share my uneasiness about Calyste," she said.

"Did you notice Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël's prim air this evening?" asked he.

"Yes," replied the Baroness.

"She has, I know, the very best intentions towards our dear Calyste; she loves him as if he were her son; and his conduct in la Vendée at his father's side, with MADAME's praise of his devoted behavior, has added to the affection Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël feels for him. She will endow either of her nieces whom Calyste may marry with all her fortune by deed of gift.

"You have, I know, in Ireland, a far richer match for your beloved boy; but it is well to have two strings to one's bow. In the event of your family not choosing to undertake to settle

anything on Calyste, Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël's fortune is not to be despised. You could, no doubt, find your son a wife with seven thousand francs a year, but not the savings of forty years, nor lands managed, tilled, and kept up as Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël's are. That wicked woman, Mademoiselle des Touches, has come to spoil everything. We have at last found out something about her."

"Well?" asked the mother.

"Oh, she is a slut, a baggage," exclaimed the Curé. "A woman of doubtful habits, always hanging about the theatres in the company of actors and actresses, squandering her fortune with journalists, painters, musicians—the devil's own, in short! When she writes, she uses a different name in her books, and is better known by that, it is said, than by that of des Touches. A perfect imp, who has never been inside a church since her first communion, excepting to stare at statues or pictures. She has spent her fortune in decorating les Touches in the most improper manner to make it a sort of Mahomet's Paradise, where the houris are not women. There is more good wine drunk there while she is in the place than in all Guérande besides in a year. Last year the Demoiselles Bougniol had for lodgers some men with goats' beards, suspected of being 'blues,' who used to go to her house, and who sang songs that made those virtuous girls blush and weep. That is the woman your son at present adores.

"If that creature were to ask this evening for one of the atrocious books in which atheists nowadays laugh everything to scorn, the young Chevalier would come and saddle his horse with his own hands, to ride off at a gallop to fetch it for her from Nantes. I do not know that Calyste would do so much for the Church. And then, Bretonne as she is, she is not a Royalist. If it were necessary to march out, gun in hand, for the good cause, should Mademoiselle des Touches—or Camille Maupin, for that, I remember, is her name—want to keep Calyste with her, your son would let his old father set out alone."

"No," said the Baroness.

"I should not like to put him to the test, you might feel it too painfully," replied the Curé. All Guérande is in a commotion over the Chevalier's passion for this amphibious creature that is neither man nor woman, who smokes like a trooper, writes like a journalist, and, at this moment, has under her roof the most malignant writer of them all, according to the postmaster—a trimmer who reads all the papers. It is talked of at Nantes. This morning the Kergarouët cousin, who wants to see Charlotte married to a man who has sixty thousand francs a year, came to call on Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, and turned her head with roundabout tales about Mademoiselle des Touches which lasted seven hours.—There is a quarter to ten striking by the church clock, and Calyste is not come in; he is at les Touches—perhaps he will not come back till morning."

The Baroness listened to the Curé, who had unconsciously substituted monologue for dialogue; he was looking at this lamb of his flock, reading her uneasy thoughts in her face. The Baroness was blushing and trembling. When the Abbé Grimont saw tears in the distressed mother's beautiful eyes, he was deeply touched.

"I will see Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël to-morrow, be comforted," said he, in an encouraging tone. "The mischief is, perhaps, not so great as rumor says; I will find out the truth. Besides, Mademoiselle Jacqueline has confidence in me. Again, we have brought up Calyste, and he will not allow himself to be bewitched by the demon; he will do nothing to disturb the peace of his family, or the plans we are making for his future life. Do not weep; all is not lost, madame; one fault is not vice."

"You only tell me the details," said the Baroness. "Was not I the first to perceive the change in Calyste? A mother feels keenly the pain of being second in her son's affections, the grief of not being alone in his heart. That phase of a man's life is one of the woes of motherhood; but though I knew it must come, I did not expect it so soon. And, then, I could have wished that he should have taken into his heart

some beautiful and noble creature, not a mere actress, a posture-maker, a woman who frequents theatres, an authoress accustomed to feign feeling, a bad woman who will deceive him and make him wretched. She has had 'affairs?' "

"With many men," said the Abbé Grimont. "And yet this miscreant was born in Brittany. She is a disgrace to her native soil. On Sunday I will preach a sermon about her."

"By no means!" exclaimed the Baroness. "The marsh-men and peasants are capable of attacking les Touches. Calyste is worthy of his name; he is a true Breton; and some evil might come of it if he were there, for he would fight for her as if she were the Blessed Virgin."

"It is striking ten; I will bid you good-night," said the Abbé, lighting the *oribus* of his lantern, of which the clear glass panes and glittering metal-work showed his house-keeper's minute care for all the concerns of the house. "Who could have told me, madame," he went on, "that a young man nursed at your breast, brought up by me in Christian ideas, a fervent Catholic, a boy who lived like a lamb without spot, would plunge into such a foul bog?"

"But is that quite certain?" said the mother. "And, after all, how could any woman help loving Calyste?"

"No proof is needed beyond that witch's prolonged stay at les Touches. During twenty-four years, since she came of age, this is the longest visit she has paid here. Happily for us, her apparitions have hitherto been brief."

"A woman past forty!" said the Baroness. "I have heard it said in Ireland that such a woman is the most dangerous mistress a young man can have."

"On that point I am ignorant," replied the Curé. "Nay, and I shall die in my ignorance."

"Alas! and so shall I," said the Baroness. "I wish now that I had ever been in love, to be able to study, advise, and comfort Calyste."

The priest did not cross the clean little courtyard alone; Madame du Guénic went with him as far as the gate, in the hope of hearing Calyste's step in Guérande; but she heard



"On that point I am ignorant," replied the Curé


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only the heavy sound of the Abbé's deliberate tread, which grew fainter in the distance, and ceased when the shutting of the priest's door echoed through the silent town.

The poor mother went indoors in despair at learning that the whole town was informed of what she had believed herself alone in knowing. She sat down, revived the lamp by cutting the wick with a pair of old scissors, and took up the worsted work she was accustomed to do while waiting for Calyste. She flattered herself that she thus induced her son to come home earlier, to spend less time with Mademoiselle des Touches. But this stratagem of maternal jealousy was in vain. Calyste's visits to les Touches became more and more frequent, and every evening he came in a little later; at last, the previous night, he had not returned till midnight.

The Baroness, sunk in meditation, set her stitches with the energy of women who can think while following some manual occupation. Any one who should have seen her bent to catch the light of the lamp, in the midst of the paneling of this room, four centuries old, must have admired the noble picture. Fanny's flesh had a transparency that seemed to show her thoughts legible on her brow. Stung, now, by the curiosity that comes to pure-minded women, she wondered by what diabolical secrets these daughters of Baal so bewitched a man as to make him forget his mother and his family, his country, his self-interest. Then she went so far as to wish she could see the woman, so as to judge her sanely. She calculated the extent of the mischief that the innovating spirit of the age—which the Curé described as so dangerous to youthful souls—might do to her only child, till now as guileless and pure as an innocent girl, whose beauty could not be fresher than his.

Calyste, a noble offshoot of the oldest Breton and the noblest Irish blood, had been carefully brought up by his mother. Till the moment when the Baroness handed him over to the Curé of Guérande, she was sure that not an indecent word, nor an evil idea, had ever soiled her son's ear or

his understanding. The mother, after rearing him on her own milk, and thus giving him a double infusion of her blood, could present him in virginal innocence to the priest who, out of reverence for the family, undertook to give him a complete and Christian education. Calyste was educated on the plan of the Seminary where the Abbé Grimont had been brought up. His mother taught him English. A mathematical master was discovered, not without difficulty, among the clerks at Saint-Nazaire. Calyste, of course, knew nothing of modern literature, or of the latest advance and progress of science. His education was limited to the geography and emasculated history taught in girls' schools, to the Latin and Greek of the Seminary, to the literature of dead languages, and a limited selection of French writers. When, at sixteen, he began what the Abbé called his course of philosophy, he was still as innocent as at the moment when Fanny had handed him over to the Curé. The Church was no less maternal than the mother; without being bigoted or ridiculous, this well-beloved youth was a fervent Catholic.

The Baroness longed to plan a happy and obscure life for her handsome and immaculate son. She expected some little fortune from an old aunt, about two or three thousand pounds sterling; this sum, added to the present fortune of the Guénics, might enable her to find a wife for Calyste who would bring him twelve or fifteen thousand francs a year. Charlotte de Kergarouët, with her aunt's money, some rich Irish girl, or any other heiress—it was a matter of indifference to the Baroness. She knew nothing of love; like all the people among whom she lived, she regarded marriage as a stepping-stone to fortune. Passion was a thing unknown to these Catholics, old people wholly occupied in saving their souls, in thinking of God, the King, and their own wealth.

No one, therefore, can be surprised at the gravity of the reflections that mingled with the wounded feelings in this mother's heart, living, as she did, as much for her boy's interests as by his affection. If the young couple would but listen to reason, by living parsimoniously and economizing, as

country folk know how, by the second generation the du Guénics might repurchase their estates and reconquer the splendor of wealth. The Baroness hoped to live to be old that she might see the dawn of that life of ease. Mademoiselle du Guénic had understood and adopted this scheme, and now it was threatened by Mademoiselle des Touches.

Madame du Guénic heard midnight strike with horror, and she endured an hour more of fearful alarms, for the stroke of one rang out, and still Calyste had not come home.

"Will he stay there?" she wondered. "It would be the first time—poor child!"

At this moment Calyste's step was heard in the street. The poor mother, in whose heart joy took the place of anxiety, flew from the room to the gate and opened it for her son.

"My dearest mother," cried Calyste, with a look of vexation, "why sit up for me? I have the latch-key and a tinder-box."

"You know, my child, that I can never sleep while you are out," said she, kissing him.

When the Baroness had returned to the room, she looked into her son's face to read in its expression what had hap-during the evening; but this look produced in her, as it always did, a certain emotion which custom does not weaken—which all loving mothers feel as they gaze at their human masterpiece, and which for a moment dims their sight.

Calyste had black eyes, full of vigor and sunshine, inherited from his father, with the fine, fair hair, the aquiline nose and lovely mouth, the turned-up finger-tips, the soft complexion, finish, and fairness of his mother. Though he looked not unlike a girl dressed as a man, he was wonderfully strong. His sinews had the elasticity and tension of steel springs, and the singular effect of his black eyes had a charm of its own. As yet he had no hair on his face; this late development, it is said, is a promise of long life. The young Chevalier, who wore a short jacket of black velvet, like his mother's gown, with silver buttons, had a blue neckerchief, neat gaiters, and trousers of gray drill. His snowy-white forehead bore the traces, as it seemed, of great fatigue, but,

in fact, they were those of a burden of sad thoughts. His mother, having no suspicion of the sorrows that were eating the lad's heart out, ascribed this transient change to happiness. Calyste was, nevertheless, as beautiful as a Greek god, handsome without conceit; for, in the first place, he was accustomed to see his mother, and he also cared but little for beauty, which he knew to be useless.

"And those lovely smooth cheeks," thought she, "where the rich young blood flows in a thousand tiny veins, belong to another woman, who is mistress, too, of that girl-like brow? Passion will stamp them with its agitations, and dim those fine eyes, as liquid now as a child's!"

The bitter thought fell heavy on Madame du Guénic's heart, and spoilt her pleasure.

It must seem strange that, in a family where six persons were obliged to live on three thousand francs a year, the son should have a velvet coat, and the mother a velvet dress; but Fanny O'Brien had rich relations and aunts in London, who reminded the Breton Baroness of their existence by sending her presents. Some of her sisters, having married well, took an interest in Calyste so far as to think of finding him a rich wife, knowing that he was as handsome and as well-born as their exiled favorite Fanny.

"You stayed later at les Touches than you did yesterday, my darling?" she said at last, in a broken voice.

"Yes, mother dear," replied he, without adding any explanation.

The brevity of the answer brought a cloud to his mother's brow; she postponed any explanation till the morrow. When mothers are disturbed by such alarms as the Baroness felt at this moment, they almost tremble before their sons; they instinctively feel the effects of the great emancipation of love; they understand all that this new feeling will rob them of; but, at the same time, they are, in a sense, glad of their son's happiness; there is a fierce struggle in their heart. Though the result is that the son is grown up, and on a higher level, true mothers do not like their tacit abdication; they would

rather keep their child little and wanting care. That, perhaps, is the secret of mothers' favoritism for weakly, deformed, and helpless children.

"You are very tired, dear child," said she, swallowing down her tears. "Go to bed."

A mother who does not know everything her son is doing thinks of him as lost when she loves and is as well loved as Fanny. And perhaps any other mother would have quaked in her place as much as Madame du Guénic. The patience of twenty years might be made useless. Calyste—a human masterpiece of noble, prudent, and religious training—might be ruined; the happiness so carefully prepared for him might be destroyed for ever by a woman.

Next day Calyste slept till noon, for his mother would not allow him to be roused; Mariotte gave the spoilt boy his breakfast in bed. The immutable and almost conventual rule that governed the hours of meals yielded to the young gentleman's caprices. Indeed, when at any time it was necessary to obtain Mademoiselle du Guénic's bunch of keys to get out something between meals which would necessitate interminable explanations, the only way of doing it was to plead some whim of Calyste's.

At about one o'clock, the Baron, his wife, and Mademoiselle were sitting in the dining-room; they dined at three. The Baroness had taken up the *Quotidienne,* and was finishing it to her husband, who was always rather more wakeful before his meals. Just as she had done, Madame du Guénic heard her son's step on the floor above, and laid down the paper, saying:

"Calyste, I suppose, is dining at les Touches again to-day; he has just finished dressing."

"He takes his pleasure—that boy!" said the old lady, pulling a silver whistle out of her pocket, and whistling once.

Mariotte came through the turret, making her appearance at the door, which was hidden by a silk damask curtain, like those at the windows.

"Yes," said she, "did you please to want anything?"

"The Chevalier is dining at les Touches; we shall not want the fish."

"Well, we do not know yet," said the Baroness.

"You seem vexed about it, sister; I know by the tone of your voice," said the blind woman.

"Monsieur Grimont has learnt some serious facts about Mademoiselle des Touches, who, during the last year, has done so much to change our dear Calyste."

"In what way?" asked the Baron.

"Well, he reads all sorts of books."

"Ah, ha!" said the Baron; "then that is why he neglects hunting and riding."

"She leads a very reprehensible life, and calls herself by a man's name," Madame du Guénic went on.

"A nickname among comrades," said the old man. "I used to be called *l'Intimé*, the Comte de Fontaine was *Grand-Jacques*, the Marquis de Montauran was *le Gars*. I was a great friend of *Ferdinand's;* he did not submit, any more than I did. Those were good times! There was plenty of fighting, and we had some fun here and there, all the same."

These reminiscences of the war, thus taking the place of paternal anxiety, distressed Fanny for a moment. The Curé's revelations, and her son's want of confidence, had hindered her sleeping.

"And if Monsieur le Chevalier should be in love with Mademoiselle des Touches, where is the harm?" exclaimed Mariotte. "She is a fine woman, and has thirty thousand crowns a year."

"What are you talking about, Mariotte," cried the old man. "A du Guénic to marry a des Touches! The des Touches were not even our squires at a time when the du Guesclins regarded an alliance with us as a distinguished honor."

"A woman who calls herself by a man's name—Camille Maupin!" added the Baroness.

"The Maupins are an old family," said the old man. "They are Norman, and bear *gules, three*———" he stopped short. "But she cannot be a man and a woman at the same time."

"She calls herself Maupin at the theatre."

"A des Touches cannot be an actress," said the old man. "If I did not know you, Fanny, I should think you were mad."

"She writes pieces and books," the Baroness went on.

"Writes books!" said the Baron, looking at his wife with as much astonishment as if he had heard of a miracle. "I have heard that Mademoiselle de Scudéri and Madame de Sévigné wrote books, and that was not the best of what they did. But only Louis XIV. and his court could produce such prodigies."

"You will be dining at les Touches, won't you, monsieur?" said Mariotte to Calyste, who came in.

"Probably," said the young man.

Mariotte was not inquisitive, and she was one of the family; she left the room without waiting to hear the question Madame du Guénic was about to put to Calyste.

"You are going to les Touches again, my Calyste?" said she, with an emphasis on *my* Calyste. "And les Touches is not a decent and reputable house. The mistress of it leads a wild life; she will corrupt our boy. Camille Maupin makes him read a great many books—she has had a great many adventures! And you knew it, bad child, and never said anything about it to your old folks."

"The Chevalier is discreet," said his father, "an old world virtue!"

"Too discreet!" said the jealous mother, as she saw the color mount to her son's brow.

"My dear mother," said Calyste, kneeling down before her, "I did not think it necessary to proclaim my defeat. Mademoiselle des Touches, or, if you prefer it, Camille Maupin, rejected my love eighteen months since, when she was here last. She gently made fun of me; she might be my mother, she said; a woman of forty who loved a minor committed a sort of incest, and she was incapable of such depravity. In short, she laughed at me in a hundred ways, and quite overpowered me, for she has the wit of an angel. Then, when she saw me

crying bitter tears, she comforted me by offering me her friendship in the noblest way. She has even more heart than brains; she is as generous as you are. I am like a child to her now.—Then, when she came here again, I heard that she loved another man, and I resigned myself.—Do not repeat all the calumnies you hear about her; Camille is an artist; she has genius, and leads one of those exceptional lives which cannot be judged by ordinary standards."

"My child!" said the pious Fanny, "nothing can excuse a woman for not living according to the ordinances of the Church. She fails in her duties towards God and towards society by failing in the gentle religion of her sex. A woman commits a sin even by going to a theatre; but when she writes impieties to be repeated by actors, and flies about the world, sometimes with an enemy of the Pope's, sometimes with a musician—Oh! Calyste! you will find it hard to convince me that such things are acts of faith, hope, or charity. Her fortune was given her by God to do good. What use does she make of it?"

Calyste suddenly stood up; he looked at his mother and said:

"Mother, Camille is my friend. I cannot hear her spoken of in this way, for I would give my life for her."

"Your life?" said the Baroness, gazing at her son in terror. "Your life is our life—the life of us all!"

"My handsome nephew has made use of many words that I do not understand," said the old blind woman, turning to Calyste.

"Where has he learnt them?" added his mother. "At les Touches."

"Why, my dear mother, she found me as ignorant as a carp."

"You knew all that was essential in knowing the duties enjoined on us by religion," replied the Baroness. "Ah! that woman will undermine your noble and holy beliefs."

The old aunt rose and solemnly extended her hand towards her brother, who was sleeping.

"Calyste," said she, in a voice that came from her heart, "your father never opened a book, he speaks Breton, he fought in the midst of perils for the King and for God. Educated men had done the mischief, and gentlemen of learning had deserted their country.—Learn if you will."

She sat down again, and began knitting with the vehemence that came of her mental agitation. Calyste was struck by this Phocion-like utterance.

"In short, my dearest, I have a presentiment of some evil hanging over you in that house," said his mother, in a broken voice as her tears fell.

"Who is making Fanny cry?" exclaimed the old man, suddenly wakened by the sound of his wife's voice. He looked round at her, his son, and his sister.

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing, my dear," replied the Baroness.

"Mamma," said Calyste in her mother's ear, "it is impossible that I should explain matters now; but we will talk it over this evening. When you know all, you will bless Mademoiselle des Touches."

"Mothers have no love of cursing," replied the Baroness, "and I should never curse any woman who truly loved my Calyste."

The young man said good-bye to his father, and left the house. The Baron and his wife rose to watch him as he crossed the courtyard, opened the gate, and disappeared. The Baroness did not take up the paper again; she was agitated. In a life so peaceful, so monotonous, this little discussion was as serious as a quarrel in any other family; and the mother's anxiety, though soothed, was not dispelled. Whither would this friendship, which might demand and imperil her boy's life, ultimately lead him? How could she, the Baroness, have reason to bless Mademoiselle des Touches? These two questions were as all-important to her simple soul as the maddest revolution can be to a diplomatist. Camille Maupin was a revolution in the quiet and simple home.

"I am very much afraid that this woman will spoil him for us," said she, taking up the newspaper again.

"My dear Fanny," said the old Baron, with knowing sprightliness, "you are too completely an angel to understand such things. Mademoiselle des Touches is, they say, as black as a crow, as strong as a Turk, and she is forty—our dear boy was sure to be attracted by her. He will tell a few very honorable fibs to conceal his happiness. Let him enjoy the illusions of his first love."

"If it were any other woman——"

"But, dearest Fanny, if the woman was a saint, she would not make your son welcome."

The Baroness went back to the paper.

"I will go to see her," said the old man, "and tell you what I think of her."

The speech has no point but in retrospect. After hearing the history of Camille Maupin, you may imagine the Baron face to face with this famous woman.

The town of Guérande, which for two months past had seen Calyste—its flower and its pride—going every day, morning or evening—sometimes both morning and evening—to les Touches, supposed that Mademoiselle des Touches was passionately in love with the handsome lad, and did her utmost to bewitch him. More than one girl and one young woman wondered what was the witchcraft of an old woman that she had such absolute empire over the angelic youth. And so, as Calyste crossed the High Street to go out by the gate to le Croisic, more than one eye looked anxiously after him.

It now becomes necessary to account for the reports that were current concerning the personage whom Calyste was going to see. These rumors, swelled by Breton gossip, and envenomed by the ignorance of the public, had reached even the Curé. The Tax-Receiver, the Justice of the Peace, the head clerk of the customs at Saint-Nazaire, and other literate persons in the district, had not reassured the Abbé by telling him of the eccentric life led by the woman and artist hidden under the name of Camille Maupin.

She had not yet come to eating little children, to killing

her slaves, like Cleopatra, to throwing men into the river, as the heroine of the *Tour de Nesle* is falsely accused of doing; still, to the Abbé Grimont, this monstrous creature, at once a siren and an atheist, was a most immoral combination of woman and philosopher, and fell short of every social law laid down to control or utilize the weaknesses of the fair sex. Just as Clara Gazul is the feminine pseudonym of a clever man, and George Sand that of a woman of genius, so Camille Maupin was the mask behind which a charming girl long hid herself—a Bretonne named Félicité des Touches, she who was now giving the Baronne du Guénic and the worthy Curé of Guérande so much cause for anxiety. This family has no connection with that of the des Touches of Touraine, to which the Regent's ambassador belongs, a man more famous now for his literary talents than for his diplomacy.

Camille Maupin, one of the few famous women of the nineteenth century, was long supposed to be really a man, so manly was her first appearance as an author. Everybody is now familiar with the two volumes of dramas, impossible to put on the stage, written in the manner of Shakespeare or of Lopez de Vega, and brought out in 1822, which caused a sort of literary revolution when the great question of Romanticism *versus* Classicism was a burning one in the papers, at clubs, and at the Académie. Since then Camille Maupin has written several plays and a novel which have not belied the success of her first efforts, now rather too completely forgotten.

An explanation of the chain of circumstances by which a girl assumed a masculine incarnation—by which Félicité des Touches made herself a man and a writer—of how, more fortunate than Madame de Staël, she remained free, and so was more readily excused for her celebrity—will, no doubt, satisfy much curiosity, and justify the existence of one of those monstrosities which stand up among mankind like monuments, their fame being favored by their rarity—for in twenty centuries scarcely twenty great women are to be counted. Hence, though she here plays but a secondary part, as she had great influence over Calyste, and is a figure in the

literary history of the time, no one will be sorry if we pause to study her for a rather longer time than modern fiction usually allows.

In 1793, Mademoiselle Félicité des Touches found herself an orphan. Thus her estates escaped the confiscation which no doubt would have fallen on her father or brother. Her father died on the 10th of August, killed on the palace steps among the defenders of the King, on whom he was in waiting as major of the bodyguard. Her brother, a young member of the corps, was massacred at les Carmes. Mademoiselle des Touches was but two years old when her mother died of grief a few days after this second blow. On her deathbed Madame des Touches placed her little girl in the care of her sister, a nun at Chelles. This nun, Madame de Faucombe, very prudently took the child to Faucombe, an estate of some extent near Nantes, belonging to Madame des Touches, where she settled with three Sisters from the convent. During the last days of the Terror, the mob of Nantes demolished the château and seized the Sisters and Mademoiselle des Touches, who were thrown into prison under a false charge of having harbored emissaries from Pitt and from Coburg. The ninth Thermidor saved them. Félicité's aunt died of the fright; two of the Sisters fled from France, the third handed the little girl over to her nearest relation, Monsieur de Faucombe, her mother's uncle, who lived at Nantes, and then joined her companions in exile.

Monsieur de Faucombe, a man of sixty, had married a young wife, to whom he left the management of his affairs. He busied himself only with archæology, a passion, or, to be accurate, a mania, which helps old men to think themselves alive. His ward's education was left entirely to chance. Félicité, little cared-for by a young woman who threw herself into all the pleasures of the Emperor's reign, brought herself up like a boy. She sat with Monsieur de Faucombe in his library, and read whatever he might happen to be reading. Thus she knew life well in theory, and preserved no innocence of mind though virginal at heart. Her intelligence

wandered through all the impurities of science while her heart remained pure. Her knowledge was something amazing, fed by her passion for reading, and well served by an excellent memory. Thus, at eighteen, she was as learned as the authors of to-day ought to be before trying to write. This prodigious amount of study controlled her passions far better than a convent life, which only inflames a young girl's imagination; this brain, crammed with undigested and unclassified information, governed the heart of a child. Such a depravity of mind, absolutely devoid of any influence on her chastity of person, would have amazed a philosopher or an observer, if any one at Nantes could have suspected the fine qualities of Mademoiselle des Touches.

The result was in inverse proportion to the cause: Félicité had no predisposition towards evil; she conceived of everything by her intelligence, but held aloof from the facts. She delighted old Faucombe, and helped him in his works, writing three books for the worthy gentleman, who believed them to be his own, for his spiritual paternity also was blind. Such severe work, out of harmony with the development of her girlhood, had its natural effect; Félicité fell ill, there was a fever in her blood, her lungs were threatened with inflammation. The doctors ordered her horse-exercise and social amusements. Mademoiselle des Touches became a splendid horsewoman, and had recovered in a few months.

At eighteen she made her appearance in the world, where she produced such a sensation, that at Nantes she was never called anything but the beautiful Mademoiselle des Touches. But the adoration of which she was the object left her insensible, and she had come to this by the influence of one of the sentiments which are imperishable in a woman, however superior she may be. Snubbed by her aunt and cousins, who laughed at her studies and made fun of her distant manners, assuming that she was incapable of being attractive, Félicité aimed at being light and coquettish, in short, a woman. She had expected to find some interchange of ideas, some fascination on a level with her own lofty intelligence; she was dis-

gusted by the commonplaces of ordinary conversation and the nonsense of flirtation; above all, she was provoked by the aristocratic airs of the military, to whom at that time everything gave way.

She had, as a matter of course, neglected the drawing-room arts. When she found herself less considered than the dolls who could play the piano, and make themselves agreeable by singing ballads, she aspired to become a musician. She retired into deep solitude, and set to work to study unremittingly under the guidance of the best master in the town. She was rich, she sent for Steibelt to give her finishing lessons, to the great astonishment of her neighbors. This princely outlay is still remembered at Nantes. The master's stay there cost her twelve thousand francs. She became at last a consummate musician. Later, in Paris, she took lessons in harmony and counterpoint, and composed two operas, which were immensely successful, though the public never knew her secret. These operas were ostensibly the work of Conti, one of the most eminent artists of our day; but this circumstance was connected with the history of her heart, and will be explained presently. The mediocrity of provincial society wearied her so excessively, her imagination was full of such grand ideas, that she withdrew from all the drawing-rooms after reappearing for a time to eclipse all other women by the splendor of her beauty, to enjoy her triumph over the musical performers, and win the devotion of all clever people; still, after proving her power to her two cousins, and driving two lovers to desperation, she came back to her books, to her piano, to the works of Beethoven, and to old Faucombe.

In 1812 she was one-and-twenty; the archæologist accounted to her for his management of her property; and from that time forth she herself controlled her fortune, consisting of fifteen thousand francs a year from les Touches, her father's estate; twelve thousand francs, the income at that time from the lands of Faucombe, which increased by a third when the leases were renewed; besides a capital sum of three hundred thousand francs saved by her guardian. Fé-

licité derived nothing from her country training but an apprehension of money matters and that instinct for wise administration which perhaps restores, in the provinces, the balance against the constant tendency of capital to centre in Paris. She withdrew her three hundred thousand francs from the bank where the archæologist had deposited them, and invested in consols just at the time of the disastrous retreat from Moscow. Thus she had thirty thousand francs a year more. When all her expenses were paid, she had a surplus of fifty thousand francs a year to be invested.

A girl of one-and-twenty, with such a power of will, was a match for a man of thirty. Her intellect had gained immense breadth and habits of criticism, which enabled her to judge sanely of men and things, art and politics. Thenceforward she purposed leaving Nantes; but old Monsieur Faucombe fell ill of the malady that carried him off. She was like a wife to the old man; she nursed him for eighteen months with the devotion of a guardian angel, and closed his eyes at the very time when Napoleon was fighting with Europe over the dead body of France. She therefore postponed her departure for Paris till the end of the war.

As a Royalist she flew to hail the return of the Bourbons to Paris. She was welcomed there by the Grandlieus, with whom she was distantly connected; but then befell the catastrophe of the 20th of March, and everything remained in suspense. She had the opportunity of seeing on the spot this last resurrection of the Empire, of admiring the *Grande Armée* which came out on the Champ de Mars, as in an arena, to salute its Cæsar before dying at Waterloo Félicité's great and lofty soul was captivated by the magical spectacle. Political agitations and the fairy transformations of the theatrical drama, lasting for three months, and known as the hundred days, absorbed her wholly, and preserved her from any passion, in the midst of an upheaval that broke up the Royalist circle in which she had first come out. The Grandlieus followed the Bourbons to Ghent, leaving their house at Mademoiselle des Touches' service.

Félicité, who could not accept a dependent position, bought for the sum of a hundred and thirty thousand francs one of the handsomest mansions in the Rue du Mont-Blanc, where she settled on the return of the Bourbons in 1815; the garden alone is worth two million francs now. Being accustomed to act on her own responsibility, Félicité soon took the habit of independent action, which seems the privilege of men only. In 1816 she was five-and-twenty. She knew nothing of marriage; she conceived of it only in her brain, judged of it by its causes instead of observing its effect, and saw only its disadvantages. Her superior mind rebelled against the abdication which begins the life of a married woman; she keenly felt the preciousness of independence, and had nothing but disgust for the cares of motherhood. These details are necessary to justify the anomalies that characterize Camille Maupin. She never knew father or mother, she was her own mistress from her childhood, her guardian was an old antiquary, chance placed her in the domain of science and imagination, in the literary world, instead of keeping her within the circle drawn by the futile education given to women—a mother's lectures on dress, on the hypocritical proprieties, and man-hunting graces of her sex. And so, long before she became famous, it could be seen at a glance that she had never played the doll.

Towards the end of the year 1817, Félicité des Touches perceived that her face showed symptoms not indeed of fading, but of the beginning of fatigue. She understood that her beauty would suffer from the fact of her persistent celibacy; she was bent on remaining beautiful, for at that time she prized her beauty. Knowledge warned her of the doom set by Nature on her creations, which deteriorate as much by misapplication as by ignorance of her laws. The vision of her aunt's emaciated face rose before her and made her shudder. Thus placed between marriage and passion, she determained to remain free; but she no longer scorned the homage that she met with on all hands.

At the date when this story begins, she was almost the same

as she had been in 1817. Eighteen years had passed over her and left her untouched; at the age of forty she might have called herself twenty-five. Thus a picture of her in 1836 will represent her as she was in 1817. Women who know under what conditions of temperament and beauty a woman must live to resist the attacks of time, will understand how and why Félicité des Touches enjoyed such high privileges, as they study a portrait for which the most glowing colors of the palette must be brought into play.

Brittany offers a singular problem in the predominance of brown hair, brown eyes, and a dark complexion, in a country so close to England, where the atmospheric conditions are so nearly similar. Does the question turn on the wider one of race, or on unobserved physical influences? Scientific men will some day perhaps inquire into the cause of this peculiarity, which does not exist in the neighboring province of Normandy. Pending its solution, the strange fact lies before us that fair women are rare among the women of Brittany, who almost always have the brilliant eyes of Southerners; but instead of showing the tall figures and serpentine grace of Italy or Spain, they are usually small, short, with neat, set figures, excepting some women of the upper classes which have been crossed by aristocratic alliances.

Mademoiselle des Touches, a thoroughbred Bretonne, is of medium height, about five feet, though she looks taller. This illusion is produced by the character of her countenance, which gives her dignity. She has the complexion which is characteristic of Italian beauty, pale olive by day, and white under artificial light; you might think it was animated ivory. Light glides over such a skin as over a polished surface, it glistens on it; only strong emotion can bring a faint flush to the middle of each cheek, and it disappears at once. This peculiarity gives her face the placidity of a savage. The face, long rather than oval, resembles that of some beautiful Isis in the bas-reliefs of Egina; it has the purity of a Sphinx's head, polished by desert fires, lovingly touched by the flame of the Egyptian sun. Her hair, black and thick, falls in plaited

loops over her neck, like the headdress with rigid double locks of the statues at Memphis, accentuating very finely the general severity of her features. She has a full, broad forehead, bossy at the temples, bright with its smooth surface on which the light lingers, and moulded like that of a hunting Diana; a powerful, wilful brow, calm and still. The eyebrows, strongly arched, bend over eyes in which the fire sparkles now and again like that of fixed stars. The white of the eye is not bluish, nor veined with red, nor is it pure white; its texture looks horny, still it is warm in tone; the black centre has an orange ring round the edge; it is bronze set in gold—but living gold, animated bronze. The pupil is deep. It is not, as in some eyes, lined, as it were, like a mirror, reflecting the light, and making them look like the eyes of tigers and cats; it has not that terrible fixity of gaze that makes sensitive persons shiver; but this depth has infinitude, just as the brightness of mirror-eyes has finality. The gaze of the observer can sink and lose itself in that soul, which can shrink and retire as rapidly as it can flash forth from those velvet eyes. In a moment of passion, Camille Maupin's eye is superb; the gold of her glance lights up the yellowish white and the whole flashes fire; but when at rest it is dull, the torpor of deep thought often gives it a look of stupidity; and when the light of the soul is absent, the lines of the face also look sad. The lashes are short, but as black and thickset as the hair of an ermine's tail. The lids are tawny, and netted with fine red veins, giving them at once strength and elegance, two qualities hard to combine in women. All round the eyes there is not the faintest wrinkle or stain. Here again you will think of Egyptian granite mellowed by time. Only the cheek-bones, though softly rounded, are more prominent than in most women, and confirm the impression of strength stamped on the face.

Her nose, narrow and straight, has high-cut nostrils, with enough of passionate dilation to show the rosy gleam of their delicate lining; this nose is well set on to the brow, to which it is joined by an exquisite curve, and it is perfectly white

to the very tip—a tip endowed with a sort of proper motion that works wonders whenever Camille is angry, indignant, or rebellious. There especially—as Talma noted—the rage or irony of lofty souls finds expression. Rigid nostrils betray a certain shallowness. The nose of a miser never quivers, it is tightly set like his lips; everything in his face is as close shut as himself.

Camille's mouth, arched at the corners, is brightly red; the lips, full of blood, supply that living, impulsive carmine that gives them such infinite charm, and may reassure the lover who might be alarmed by the grave majesty of the face. The upper lip is thin, the furrow beneath the nose dents it low down, like a brow, which gives peculiar emphasis to her scorn. Camille has no difficulty in expressing anger. This pretty lip meets the broader red edge of a lower lip that is exquisitely kind, full of love, and carved, it might be, by Phidias, as the edge of an opened pomegranate, which it resembles in color. The chin is round and firm, a little heavy, but expressing determination, and finishing well this royal, if not goddess-like, profile. It is necessary to add that below the nose, the lip is faintly shaded by a down that is wholly charming; nature would have blundered if she had not there placed that tender, smoky tinge.

The ear is most delicately formed, a sign of other concealed daintinesses. The bust broad, the bosom small but not flat, the hips slender but graceful. The slope of the back is magnificent, more suggestive of the Bacchus than of the Venus Callipyge. Herein we see a detail that distinguishes almost all famous women from the rest of their sex; they have in this a vague resemblance to men; they have neither the pliancy nor the freedom of line that we see in women destined by nature to be mothers; their gait is unbroken by a gentle sway. This observation is, indeed, two-edged; it has its counterpart in men whose hips have a resemblance to those of women,—men who are cunning, sly, false, and cowardly.

Camille's head, instead of having a hollow at the nape of

the neck, is set on her shoulders with a swelling outline without an inward curve, an unmistakable sign of power; and this neck, in some attitudes, has folds of athletic firmness. The muscles attaching the upper arm, splendidly moulded, are those of a colossal woman. The arm is powerfully modeled, ending in wrists of English slenderness, and pretty delicate hands, plump and full of dimples, finished off with pink nails cut to an almond shape, and well set in the flesh. Her hands are of a whiteness which proclaims that all the body, full, firm, and solid, is of a quite different tone from her face. The cold, steadfast carriage of her head is contradicted by the ready mobility of the lips, their varying expression, and the sensitive nostrils of an artist.

Still, in spite of this exciting promise, not wholly visible to the profane, there is something provoking in the calmness of this countenance. The face is melancholy and serious rather than gracious, stamped with the sadness of constant meditation. Mademoiselle des Touches listens more than she speaks. She is alarming by her silence and that look of deep scrutiny. Nobody among really well-informed persons can ever have seen her without thinking of the real Cleopatra, the little brown woman who so nearly changed the face of the earth; but in Camille the animal is so perfect, so homogeneous, so truly leonine, that a man with anything of the Turk in him regrets the embodiment of so great a mind in such a frame, and wishes it were altogether woman. Every one fears lest he may find there the strange corruption of a diabolical soul. Do not cold analysis and positive ideas throw their light upon the passions in this unwedded soul? In her, does not judgment take the place of feeling? Or, a still more terrible phenomenon, does she not feel and judge both together? Her brain being omnipotent, can she stop where other women stop? Has the intellectual power left the affections weak? Can she be gracious? Can she condescend to the pathetic trifles by which a woman busies, amuses, and interests the man she loves? Does she not crush a sentiment at once if it does not answer to the infinite that

she apprehends and contemplates? Who can fill up the gulfs in her eyes?

We fear lest we should find in her some mysterious element of unsubdued virginity. The strength of a woman ought to be merely symbolical; we are frightened at finding it real. Camille Maupin is in some degree the living image of Schiller's Isis, hidden in the depths of the temple, at whose feet the priests found the dying gladiators who had dared to consult her. Her various "affairs," believed in by the world, and not denied by Camille herself, confirm the doubts suggested by her appearance. But perhaps she enjoys this calumny. The character of her beauty has not been without effect on her reputation; it has helped her, just as her fortune and position have upheld her in the midst of society. If a sculptor should wish to make an admirable statue of Brittany, he might copy Mademoiselle des Touches. Such a sanguine, bilious temperament alone can withstand the action of time. The perennially nourished texture of such a skin, as it were, varnished, is the only weapon given to woman by nature to ward off wrinkles, which in Camille are hindered also by the passivity of her features.

In 1817 this enchanting woman threw open her house to artists, famous authors, learned men, and journalists, the men to whom she was instinctively attracted. She had a drawing-room like that of Baron Gérard, where the aristocracy mingled with distinguished talents and the cream of Parisian womanhood. Mademoiselle des Touches' family connections and her fine fortune, now augmented by that of her aunt the nun, protected her in her undertaking—a difficult one in Paris—of forming a circle. Her independence was one cause of her success. Many ambitious mothers dreamed of getting her to marry a son whose wealth was disproportioned to the splendor of his armorial bearings. Certain peers of France, attracted by her eighty thousand francs a year and tempted by her splendid house and establishment, brought the strictest and most fastidious ladies of their family. The diplomatic world, on the look-out for wit and amusement, came and found pleasure there.

Thus Mademoiselle des Touches, the centre of so many interests, could study the different comedies which all men, even the most distinguished, are led to play by passion, avarice, or ambition. She soon saw the world as it really is, and was so fortunate as not to fall at once into such an absorbing love as engrosses a woman's intellect and faculties, and prevents her wholesome judgment. Generally a woman feels, enjoys, and judges, each in turn; hence three ages, the last coinciding with the sad period of old age. To Félicité the order was reversed. Her youth was shrouded in the snows of science, the chill of thoughtfulness. This transposition also explains the oddity of her life and the character of her talents. She was studying men at the age when most women see but one; she despised what they admire; she detected falsehood in the flatteries they accept as truth; she laughed at what makes them serious.

This contradictory state lasted a long time; it had a disastrous termination; it was her fate to find her first love, new-born and tender in her heart, at an age when women are required by nature to renounce love. Her first *liaison* was kept so secret that no one ever knew of it. Félicité, like all women who believe in the commonsense of their feelings, was led to count on finding a beautiful soul in a beautiful body; she fell in love with a face, and discovered all the foolishness of a lady's man, who thought of her merely as a woman. It took her some time to get over her disgust and this mad connection. Another man guessed her trouble, and consoled her without looking for any return, or at any rate he concealed his purpose. Félicité thought she had found the magnanimity of heart and mind that the dandy had lacked. This man had one of the most original intellects of the day. He himself wrote under a pseudonym, and his first works revealed him as an admirer of Italy. Félicité must needs travel or perpetuate the only form of ignorance in which she remained. This man, a sceptic and a scoffer, took Félicité to study the land of Art. This famous "Anonymous" may be regarded as Camille Maupin's

teacher and creator. He reduced her vast information to order, he added to it a knowledge of the masterpieces of which Italy is full, and gave her that subtle and ingenious tone, epigrammatic and yet deep, which is characteristic of his talent—always a little eccentric in its expression—but modified in Camille Maupin by the delicate feeling and the ingenious turn natural to women; he inoculated her with a taste for the works of English and German literature, and made her learn the two languages while traveling.

At Rome, in 1820, Mademoiselle des Touches found herself deserted for an Italian. But for this disaster she might never have become famous. Napoleon said that Misfortune was midwife to Genius. This event gave Mademoiselle des Touches at once and for ever the scorn of mankind which is her great strength. Félicité was dead and Camille was born.

She returned to Paris in the company of Conti, the great musician, for whom she wrote the libretti of two operas; but she had no illusions left, and became, though the world did not know it, a sort of female Don Juan—without either debts or conquests. Encouraged by success, she published the two volumes of dramas which immediately placed Camille Maupin among the anonymous celebrities. She told the story of her betrayed love in an admirable little romance, one of the masterpieces of the time. This book, a dangerous example, was compared, and on the level, with *Adolphe,* a horrible lament, of which the counterpart was found in Camille's tale. The delicate nature of her literary disguise is not yet fully understood; some refined intelligences still see nothing in it but the magnanimity that subjects a man to criticism and screens a woman from fame by allowing her to remain unknown.

In spite of herself, her reputation grew every day, as much by the influence of her *salon* as for her repartees, the soundness of her judgment, and the solidity of her acquirements. She was regarded as an authority, her witticisms were repeated, she could not abdicate the functions with which

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Parisian society invested her. She became a recognized exception. The fashionable world bowed to the talent and the wealth of this strange girl; it acknowledged and sanctioned her independence; women admired her gifts, and men her beauty. Indeed, her conduct was always ruled by social proprieties. Her friendships seemed to be entirely Platonic. There was nothing of the authoress—the female author—about her; as a woman of the world Mademoiselle des Touches is delightful—weak at appropriate moments, indolent, coquettish, devoted to dress, charmed with the trivialities that appeal to women and poets.

She perfectly understood that after Madame de Staël there was no place in this century for a Sappho, and that no Ninon could exist in Paris where there were no grand *Seigneurs,* no voluptuous Court. She is the Ninon of intellect; she adores art and artists; she goes from the poet to the musician, from the sculptor to the prose-writer. She is full of a noble generosity that verges on credulity, so ready is she to pity misfortune and to disdain the fortunate. Since 1830 she has lived in a chosen circle of proved friends, who truly love and esteem each other. She dwells far removed from such turmoil as Madame de Staël's, and not less far from political conflict; and she makes great fun of Camille Maupin as the younger brother of George Sand, of whom she speaks as "Brother Cain," for this new glory has killed her own. Mademoiselle des Touches admires her happier rival with angelic readiness, without any feeling of jealousy or covert envy.

Until the time when this story opens she had led the happiest life conceivable for a woman who is strong enough to take care of herself. She had come to les Touches five or six times between 1817 and 1834. Her first visit had been made just after her first disenchantment, in 1818. Her house at les Touches was uninhabitable; she sent her steward to Guérande, and took his little house at les Touches. As yet she had no suspicion of her coming fame; she was sad, she would see no one; she wanted to contemplate herself, as it

were, after this great catastrophe. She wrote to a lady in Paris, a friend, explaining her intentions and giving instructions for furniture to be sent for les Touches. The things came by ship to Nantes, were transhipped to a smaller boat for le Croisic, and thence were carried, not without difficulty, across the sands to les Touches. She sent for workmen from Paris, and settled herself at les Touches, which she particularly liked. She meant to meditate there on the events of life, as in a little private Chartreuse.

At the beginning of winter she returned to Paris. Then the little town of Guérande was torn by diabolical curiosity; nothing was talked of but the Asiatic luxury of Mademoiselle des Touches. The notary, her agent, gave tickets to admit visitors to les Touches, and people came from Batz, from le Croisic, and from Savenay. This curiosity produced in two years the enormous sum for the gatekeeper and gardener of seventeen francs.

Mademoiselle did not come there again till two years later, on her return from Italy, and arrived by le Croisic. For some time no one knew that she was at Guérande, and with her Conti the composer. Her appearance at intervals did not greatly excite the curiosity of the little town of Guérande. Her steward and the notary at most had been in the secret of Camille Maupin's fame. By this time, however, new ideas had made some little progress at Guérande, and several persons knew of Mademoiselle des Touches' double existence. The postmaster got letters addressed to "Camille Maupin, aux Touches."

At last the veil was rent. In a district so essentially Catholic, old-world, and full of prejudices, the strange life led by this illustrious and unmarried woman could not fail to start the rumors which had frightened the Abbé Grimont; it could never be understood; she seemed an anomaly.

Félicité was not alone at les Touches; she had a guest. This visitor was Claude Vignon, the haughty and contemptuous writer who, though he has never published anything but criticism, has impressed the public and literary circles with

an idea of his superiority. Félicité, who for the last seven years had made this writer welcome, as she had a hundred others—authors, journalists, artists, and people of fashion—who knew his inelastic temperament, his idleness, his utter poverty, his carelessness, and his disgust at things in general, seemed by her behavior to him to wish to marry him. She explained her conduct, incomprehensible to her friends, by her ambition and the horror she felt of growing old; she wanted to place the rest of her life in the hands of a superior man for whom her fortune might be a stepping-stone, and who would uphold her importance in the literary world. So she had carried off Claude Vignon from Paris to les Touches, as an eagle takes a kid in his talons, to study him and take some vehement step; but she was deceiving both Calyste and Claude—she was not thinking of marriage. She was in the most violent throes that can convulse a soul so firm as hers, for she found herself the dupe of her own intellect, and saw her life illuminated too late by the sunshine of love, glowing as it glows in the heart of a girl of twenty.

Now for a picture of Camille's "Chartreuse."

At a few hundred paces from Guérande the *terra firma* of Brittany ends, and the salt marshes and sand-hills begin. A rugged road, to which vehicles are unknown, leads down a ravine to the desert of sands left by the sea as neutral ground between the waters and the land. This desert consists of barren hills, of "pans" of various sizes edged with a ridge of clay, in which the salt is collected, of the creek which divides the mainland from the island of le Croisic. Though in geography le Croisic is a peninsula, as it is attached to Brittany only by the strand between it and the Bourg de Batz, a shifting bottom which it is very difficult to cross, it may be regarded as an island. At an angle where the road from le Croisic to Guérande joins the road on the mainland, stands a country house, enclosed in a large garden remarkable for its wrung and distorted pine-trees—some spreading parasol-like at the top, others stripped of their boughs, and all showing red, scarred trunks where the bark has been torn away.

These trees, martyrs to the storm, growing literally in spite of wind and tide, prepare the mind for the melancholy and strange spectacle of the salt marshes, and the sand-hills looking like solidified waves.

The house, well built of schistose stone and cement held together by courses of granite, has no pretensions to architecture; the eye sees only a bare wall, regularly pierced by the windows; those on the first floor have large panes, on the ground floor small quarries. Above the first floor there are lofts, under an enormously high-pointed roof, with a gable at each end, and two large dormers on each side. Under the angle of each gable a window looks out, like a Cyclops' eye, to the west over the sea, to the east at Guérande. One side of the house faces the Guérande road; the other the waste over which le Croisic is seen, and beyond that the open sea. A little stream escapes through an opening in the garden wall on the side by the road to le Croisic, which it crosses, and is soon lost in the sand, or in the little pool of salt water enclosed by the sand-hills and marsh-land, being left there by the arm of the sea.

A few fathoms of roadway, constructed in this break in the soil, leads to the house. It is entered through a gate; the courtyard is surrounded by unpretentious rural outhouses—a stable, a coach-house, a gardener's cottage with a poultry yard and sheds adjoining, of more use to the gatekeeper than to his mistress. The gray tones of this building harmonize delightfully with the scenery it stands in. The grounds are an oasis in this desert, on the edge of which the traveler has passed a mud-hovel, where custom-house officers keep guard. This house, with no lands, or rather of which the lands lie in the district of Guérande, derives an income of ten thousand francs from the marshes, and from farms scattered about the mainland. This was the fief of les Touches, deprived of its feudal revenues by the Revolution. Les Touches is still a property; the marshmen still speak of the *Château* and they would talk of the *Lord* if the owner were not a woman. When Félicité restored les Touches, she was

too much of an artist to think of altering the desolate-looking exterior which gives this lonely building the appearance of a prison. Only the gate was improved by the addition of two brick piers with an architrave, under which a carriage can drive in. The courtyard was planted.

The arrangement of the ground floor is common to most country houses built a hundred years ago. The dwelling was evidently constructed on the ruins of a little *castel* perched there as a link connecting le Croisic and Batz with Guérande, and lording it over the marshes. A hall had been contrived at the foot of the stairs. The first room is a large wainscoted anteroom where Félicité has a billiard-table; next comes an immense drawing-room with six windows, two of which, at the gable-end, form doors leading to the garden, down ten steps, corresponding in the arrangement of the room with the door into the billiard-room, and that into the dining-room. The kitchen, at the other end, communicates with the dining-room through the pantry. The staircase is between the billiard-room and the kitchen, which formerly had a door into the hall; this Mademoiselle des Touches closed, and opened one to the courtyard.

The loftiness and spaciousness of the rooms enables Camille to treat this ground with noble simplicity. She was careful not to introduce any elaboration of detail. The drawing-room, painted gray, has old mahogany furniture with green silk cushions, white cotton window curtains bordered with green, two consoles, and a round table; in the middle is a carpet with a large pattern in squares; over the huge chimney-place are an immense mirror and a clock representing Apollo's car, between candelabra of the style of the Empire. The billiard-room has gray cotton curtains, bordered with green, and two divans. The dining-room furniture consists of four large mahogany sideboards, a table, twelve mahogany chairs with horse-hair seats, and some magnificent engravings by Audran in mahogany frames. From the middle of the ceiling hangs an elegant lamp such as were usual on the staircases of fine houses, with two lights.

All the ceilings and the beams supporting them are painted to imitate wood. The old staircase, of wood with a heavy balustrade, is carpeted with green from top to bottom.

On the first floor were two sets of rooms divided by the staircase. Camille chose for her own those which look over the marshes, the sand-hills, and the sea, arranging them as a little sitting-room, a bedroom, a dressing-room, and a study. On the other side of the house she contrived two bedrooms, each with a dressing-closet and anteroom. The servants' rooms are above. The two spare rooms had at first only the most necessary furniture. The artistic luxuries for which she had sent to Paris she reserved for her own rooms. In this gloomy and melancholy dwelling, looking out on that gloomy and melancholy landscape, she wanted to have the most fantastic creations of art. Her sitting-room is hung with fine Gebolin tapestry, set in wonderfully carved frames. The windows are draped with heavy antique stuffs, a splendid brocade with a doubly shot ground, gold and red, yellow and green, falling in many bold folds, edged with royal fringes and tassels worthy of the most splendid baldachins of the Church. The room contains a cabinet which her agent found for her, worth seven or eight thousand francs now, a table of carved ebony, a writing bureau brought from Venice, with a hundred drawers, inlaid with arabesques of ivory, and some beautiful Gothic furniture. There are pictures and statuettes, the best that an artist friend could select in the old curiosity shops, where the dealers never suspected in 1818 of the price their treasures would afterwards fetch. On her tables stand fine Chinese vases of grotesque designs. The carpet is Persian, smuggled in across the sand-hills.

Her bedroom is in the Louis XV. style and a perfectly exact imitation. Here we have the carved wooden bedstead, painted white, with the arched head and side, and figures of Loves throwing flowers, the lower part stuffed and upholstered in brocaded silk, the crown above decorated with four bunches of feathers; the walls are hung with Indian chintz draped with silk cords and knots. The fireplace is

finished with rustic work, the clock of ormolu, between two large vases of the choicest blue Sèvres mounted in gilt copper; the mirror is framed to match. The Pompadour toilet-table has its lace hangings and its glass; and then there is all the fanciful small furniture, the *duchesses,* the couch, the little formal settee, the easy-chair with a quilted back, the lacquer screen, the curtains of silk to match the chairs, lined with pink satin and draped with thick ropes; the carpet woven at la Savonnerie—in short, all the elegant, rich, sumptuous, and fragile things among which the ladies of the eighteenth century made love.

The study, absolutely modern, in contrast with the gallant suggestiveness of the days of Louis XV., has pretty mahogany furniture. The book-shelves are full; it looks like a boudoir; there is a divan in it. It is crowded with the dainty trifles that women love; books that lock up, boxes for handkerchiefs and gloves; pictured lamp-shades, statuettes, Chinese grotesques, writing-cases, two or three albums, paper-weights, in short, every fashionable toy. The curious visitor notes with uneasy surprise a pair of pistols, a narghilé, a riding whip, a hammock, a pipe, a fowling-piece, a blouse, some tobacco, and a soldier's knapsack—a motley collection characteristic of Félicité.

Every lofty soul on looking round must be struck by the peculiar beauty of the landscape that spreads its breadth beyond the grounds, the last vegetation of the Continent. Those dismal squares of brackish water, divided by little white dykes on which the marshman walks, all in white, to rake out and collect the salt and heap it up; that tract over which salt vapors rise, forbidding birds to fly across, while they at the same time choke every attempt at plant-life; those sands where the eye can find no comfort but in the stiff evergreen leaves of a small plant with rose-colored flowers and in the Carthusian pink; that pool of sea-water, the sand of the dunes, and the view of le Croisic—a miniature town dropped like Venice into the sea; and beyond, the immensity of ocean, tossing a fringe of foam over the granite reefs to

emphasize their wild forms,—this scene elevates while it saddens the spirit, the effect always produced in the end by anything sublime which makes us yearn regretfully for unknown things that the soul apprehends at unattainable heights. Indeed, these wild harmonies have no charm for any but lofty natures and great sorrows. This desert, not unbroken, where the sunbeams are sometimes reflected from the water and the sand, whiten the houses of Batz, and ripple over the roofs of le Croisic with a pitiless dazzling glare, would absorb Camille for days at a time. She rarely turned to the delightful green views, the thickets, and flowery hedges that garland Guérande like a bride, with flowers and posies and veils and festoons. She was suffering dreadful and unknown misery.

As Calyste saw the weather-cocks of the two gables peeping above the furze-bushes of the highroad and the gnarled heads of the fir-trees, the air seemed to him lighter; to him Guérande was a prison, his life was at les Touches. Who cannot understand the attractions it held for a simple-minded lad? His love, like that of Cherubino, which had brought him to the feet of a personage who had been a great idea to him before being a woman, naturally survived her inexplicable rejections. This feeling, which is rather the desire for love than love itself, had no doubt failed to elude the inexorable analysis of Camille Maupin, and hence perhaps her repulses, a nobleness of mind misunderstood by Calyste. And, then, the marvels of modern civilization seemed all the more dazzling here by contrast with Guérande, where the poverty of the Guénics was considered splendor. Here, spread before the ravished eyes of this ignorant youth, who had never seen anything but the yellow broom of Brittany and the heaths of la Vendée, lay the Parisian glories of a new world; just as here he heard an unknown and sonorous language. Calyste here listened to the poetical tones of the finest music, the amazing music of the nineteenth century, in which melody and harmony vie with each other as equal powers, and singing and orchestration have achieved incred-

ible perfection. He here saw the works of the most prodigal painting—that of the French school of to-day, the inheritor of Italy, Spain, and Flanders, in which talent has become so common that our eyes and hearts, weary of so much talent, cry out loudly for a genius. He here read those works of imagination, those astounding creations of modern literature, which produce their fullest effect on a fresh young heart. In short, our grand nineteenth century rose before him in all its magnificence as a whole—its criticism, its struggles for every kind of renovation, its vast experiments, almost all measured by the standard of the giant who nursed its infancy in his flag, and sang it hymns to an accompaniment of the terrible bass of cannon.

Initiated by Félicité into all this grandeur, which perhaps escapes the ken of those who put it on the stage and are its makers, Calyste satisfied at les Touches the love of the marvelous that is so strong at his age, and that guileless admiration, the first love of a growing man, which is so wroth with criticism. It is so natural that flame should fly upwards! He heard the light Parisian banter, the graceful irony which revealed to him what French wit should be, and awoke in him a thousand ideas that had been kept asleep by the mild torpor of home life. To him, Mademoiselle des Touches was the mother of his intelligence, a mother with whom he might be in love without committing a crime. She was so kind to him: a woman is always adorably kind to a man in whom she has inspired a passion, even though she should not seem to share it. At this moment Félicité was giving him music lessons. To him the spacious rooms on the ground floor, looking all the larger by reason of the skilful arrangement of the lawns and shrubs in the little park; the staircase, lined with masterpieces of Italian patience—carved wood, Venetian and Florentine mosaics, bas-reliefs in ivory and marble, curious toys made to the order of the fairies of the Middle Ages; the upper rooms, so cozy, so dainty, so voluptuously artistic, were all infused and living with a light, a spirit, an atmosphere, that were supernatural, in-

definable, and strange. The modern world with its poetry was in strong contrast to the solemn, patriarchal world of Guérande, and the two systems here were face to face. On one hand, the myriad effects of art; on the other, the simplicity of wild Brittany. No one, then, need ask why the poor boy, as weary as his mother was of the subtleties of *mouche,* always felt a qualm as he entered this house, as he rang the bell, as he crossed the yard. It is to be observed that these presentiments cease to agitate men of riper growth, inured to the mishaps of life, whom nothing can surprise, and who are prepared for everything.

As he went in, Calyste heard the sound of the piano; he thought that Camille Maupin was in the drawing-room; but on entering the billiard-room he could no longer hear it. Camille was playing, no doubt, on the little upright piano, brought for her from England by Conti, which stood in the little drawing-room above. As he mounted the stairs, where the thick carpet completely deadened the sound of footsteps, Calyste went more and more slowly. He perceived that this music was something extraordinary. Félicité was playing to herself alone; she was talking to herself. Instead of going in, the young man sat down on a Gothic settle with a green velvet cushion on the landing, beneath the window, which was artistically framed in carved wood stained with walnut juice and varnished.

Nothing could be more mysteriously melancholy than Camille's improvisation; it might have been the cry of a soul wailing a *De profundis* to God from the depths of the grave. The young lover knew it for the prayer of love in despair, the tenderness of resigned grief, the sighing of controlled anguish. Camille was amplifying, varying, and changing the introduction to the *cavatina, "Grâce pour toi, grâce pour moi,"* from the fourth act of *Robert le Diable.* Suddenly she began to sing the *scena* in heartrending tones, and broke off. Calyste went in and saw the reason of this abrupt ending. Poor Camille Maupin, beautiful Félicité, turned to him without affectation, her face bathed in tears, took out her handkerchief to wipe them away, and said simply:

"Good-morning."

She was charming in her morning dress; on her head was one of the red chenille nets at that time in fashion, from which the shining curls of her black hair fell on her neck. A very short pelisse formed a modern Greek tunic, showing below it cambric trousers, with embroidered frills, and the prettiest scarlet and gold Turkish slippers.

"What is the matter?" asked Calyste.

"He has not come back," she replied, standing up at the window, and looking out over the sands, the creek, and the marshes.

This reply accounted for her costume. Camille, it would seem, was expecting Claude Vignon, and she was fretted as a woman who had wasted her pains. A man of thirty would have seen this. Calyste only saw that she was unhappy.

"You are anxious?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied, with a melancholy that this boy could not fathom. Calyste was hastily leaving the room.

"Well, where are you going?"

"To find him."

"Dear child!" said she, taking his hand, and drawing him to her with one of those tearful looks which to a young soul is the highest reward. "Are you mad? Where do you think you can find him on this shore?"

"I will find him."

"Your mother will suffer mortal anguish. Besides—stay. Come, I insist upon it," and she made him sit down on the divan. "Do not break your heart about me. These tears that you see are the tears we take pleasure in. There is a faculty in women which men have not: that of abandoning ourselves to our nerves by indulging our feelings to excess. By imagining certain situations, and giving way to the idea, we work ourselves up to tears, sometimes into a serious condition and real illness. A woman's fancies are not the sport of the mind merely, but of the heart.—You have come at the right moment; solitude is bad for me. I am not deluded by the wish he felt to go without me to study le Croisic and its rocks, the Bourg de Batz, and its sands and salt-

marshes. I knew he would spend several days over it instead of one. He wished to leave us two alone; he is jealous, or rather he is acting jealousy. You are young; you are handsome."

"Why did you not tell me sooner? Must I come no more?" asked Calyste, failing to restrain a tear that rolled down his cheek, and touched Félicité deeply.

"You are an angel!" she exclaimed.

Then she lightly sang Mathilde's strain *Restez* out of *William Tell,* to efface all gravity from this grand reply of a princess to her subject.

"He thus hopes," she added, "to make me believe in a greater love for me than he feels. He knows all the regard I feel for him," she went on, looking narrowly at Calyste, "but he is perhaps humiliated to find himself my inferior in this. Possibly, too, he has formed some suspicions of you, and thinks he will take us by surprise.—But, even if he is guilty of nothing worse than of wishing to enjoy the delights of this expedition in the wilds without me, of refusing to let me share his excursions, and the ideas the scenes may arouse in him, of leaving me in mortal alarms,—is not that enough? His great brain has no more love for me than had the musician, the wit, the soldier. Sterne is right: names have a meaning, and mine is the bitterest mockery. I shall die without ever finding in a man such love as I have in my heart, such poetry as I have in my soul."

She sat with her arms hanging limp, her head thrown back on the cushion, her eyes dull with concentrated thought, and fixed on a flower in the carpet. The sufferings of superior minds are mysteriously grand and imposing; they reveal immense expanses of the soul, to which the spectator's fancy adds yet greater breadth. Such souls share in the privilege of royalty, whose affections cling to a nation, and then strike a whole world.

"Why did you——?" began Calyste, who could not finish the sentence. Camille Maupin's beautiful, burning hand was laid on his, and eloquently stopped him.

"Nature has forsworn her laws by granting me five or six years of added youth. I have repelled you out of selfishness. Sooner or later age would have divided us.—I am thirteeen years older than he is, and that is quite enough!"

"You will still be beautiful when you are sixty!" cried Calyste, heroically.

"God grant it!" she replied, with a smile. "But, my dear child, I intend to love him. In spite of his insensibility, his lack of imagination, his cowardly indifference, and the envy that consumes him, I believe that there is greatness under those husks; I hope to galvanize his heart, to save him from himself, to attach him to me. . . . Alas! I have the brain to see clearly while my heart is blind."

She was appallingly clear to herself. She could suffer and analyze her suffering, as Cuvier and Dupuytren could explain to their friends the fatal progress of their diseases and the steady advance of death. Camille Maupin knew passion as these two learned men knew anatomy.

"I came here on purpose to form an opinion about him; he is already bored. He misses Paris, as I told him; he is homesick for something to criticise. Here there is no author to be plucked, no system to be undermined, no poet to be driven to despair; he dares not here rush into some excess in which he could unburden himself of the weight of thought. Alas! my love, perhaps, is not true enough to refresh his brain. In short, I cannot intoxicate him!—To-night you and he must get drunk together; I shall say I am ailing, and stay in my room; I shall know if I am mistaken."

Calyste turned as red as a cherry, red from his chin to his hair, and his ears tingled with the glow.

"Good God!" she exclaimed, "and here am I depraving your maiden innocence without thinking of what I was doing! Forgive me, Calyste. When you love you will know that you would try to set the Seine on fire to give the least pleasure to 'the object of your affections,' as the fortune-tellers say."

She paused.

"There are some proud and logical spirits," she went on, "who at a certain age can exclaim, 'If I could live my life again, I would do everything the same.' Now I—and I do not think myself weak—I say, 'I would be such a woman as your mother.'

"To have a Calyste of my own! What happiness! If I had had the greatest fool on earth for a husband, I should have been a humble and submissive wife. And yet I have not sinned against society; I have only hurt myself. Alas! dear child, a woman can no longer go into society unprotected excepting in what is called a primitive state. The affections that are not in harmony with social or natural laws, the affections which are not binding, in short, evade us. If I am to suffer for suffering's sake, I might as well be useful. What do I care for the children of my Faucombe cousins, who are no longer Faucombes, whom I have not seen for twenty years, and who married merchants only! You are a son who has cost me none of the cares of motherhood; I shall leave you my fortune, and you will be happy, at any rate, so far as that is concerned, by my act, dear jewel of beauty and sweetness, which nothing should ever change or fade!"

As she spoke these words in a deep voice, her eyelids fell, that he should not read her eyes.

"You have never chosen to accept anything from me," said Calyste. "I shall restore your fortune to your heirs."

"Child!" said Camille, in her rich tones, while the tears fell down her cheeks, "can nothing save me from myself?"

"You have a story to tell me, and a letter to——" the generous boy began, to divert her from her distress. But she interrupted him before he could finish his sentence.

"You are right. I must, above all things, keep my word. It was too late yesterday; but we shall have time enough to-day, it would seem," she said, in a half-playful, half-bitter tone. "To fulfil my promise, I will sit where I can look down the road to the cliffs."

Calyste placed a deep Gothic armchair where she could look out in that direction, and opened the window. Camille Maupin, who shared the Oriental tastes of the more illustrious writer of her own sex, took out a magnificent Persian narghileh that an ambassador had given her; she filled it with patchouli leaves, cleaned the mouthpiece, scented the quill before she inserted it—it would serve her but once—put a match to the dried leaves, placed the handsome instrument of pleasure, with its long-necked bowl of blue-and-gold enamel, at no great distance, and then rang for tea.

"If you would like a cigarette?—Ah! I always forget that you do not smoke. Such immaculateness as yours is rare! I feel as though only the fingers of an Eve fresh from the hand of God ought to caress the downy satin of your cheeks."

Calyste reddened and sat down on a stool; he did not observe the deep emotion that made Camille blush.

"The person from whom I yesterday received this letter, and who will perhaps be here to-morrow, is the Marquise de Rochefide," said Félicité. "After getting his eldest daughter married to a Portuguese grandee who has settled in France, old Rochefide, whose family is not as old as yours, wanted to connect his son with the highest nobility, so as to procure for him a peerage he had failed to obtain for himself. The Comtesse de Montcornet told him that in the department of the Orne there was a certain Mademoiselle Béatrix Maximilienne, Rose de Casteran, the youngest daughter of the Marquis de Casteran, who wanted to get his two daughters off his hands without any money, so as to leave his whole fortune to his son, the Comte de Casteran. The Casterans, it would seem, are descended direct from Adam.

"Béatrix, born and brought up in the château of Casteran, at the time of her marriage in 1828, was twenty years of age. She was remarkable for what you provincials call eccentricity, which is simply a superior mind, enthusiasm, a sense of the beautiful, and a fervid feeling for the works of art. Take the word of a poor woman who has trusted her-

self on these slopes, there is nothing more perilous for a woman; if she tries them, she arrives where you see me, and where the Marquise is—in an abyss. Men only have the staff that can be a support on the edge of those precipices, a strength which we lack, or which makes us monsters if we have it.

"Her old grandmother, the dowager Marquise de Casteran, was delighted to see her marry a man whose superior she would certainly be in birth and mind. The Rochefides did everything extremely well, Béatrix could but be satisfied; and in the same way Rochefide had every reason to be pleased with the Casterans, who, as connected with the Verneuils, the d'Esgrignons, and the Troisvilles, obtained the peerage for their son-in-law as one of the last batch made by Charles X., though it was annulled by a decree of the Revolution of July.

"Rochefide is a fool, however; he began by having a son; and as he gave his wife no respite, and almost killed her with his company, she soon had enough of him. The early days of married life are a rock of danger for small minds as for great passions. Rochefide, being a fool, mistook his wife's ignorance for coldness; he regarded Béatrix as a lymphatic creature—she is very fair—and thereupon lulled himself in perfect security, and led a bachelor life, trusting to the Marquise's supposed coldness, her pride, her haughtiness, and the splendor of a style of living which surrounds a woman in Paris with a thousand barriers. When you go there you will understand what I mean. Those who hoped to take advantage of his easy indifference would say to him, 'You are a lucky fellow. You have a heartless wife, whose passions will be in her brain; she is content with shining; her fancies are purely artistic; her jealousy and wishes will be amply satisfied if she can form a *salon* where all the wits and talents meet; she will have debauches of music, orgies of literature.'—And the husband took in all this nonsense with which simpletons are stuffed in Paris.

"At the same time, Rochefide is not a common idiot; he has as much vanity and pride as a clever man, with this

difference, that clever men assume some modesty and become cats; they coax to be coaxed in return; whereas, Rochefide has a fine flourishing conceit, rosy and plump, that admires itself in public, and is always smiling. His vanity rolls in the stable, and feeds noisily from the manger, tugging out the hay. He has faults such as are known only to those who are in a position to judge him intimately, which are noticeable only in the shade and mystery of private life, while in society and to society the man seems charming. Rochefide must have been intolerable the moment he fancied that his hearth and home were threatened; for his is that cunning and squalid jealousy that is brutal when it is roused, cowardly for six months, and murderous the seventh. He thought he deceived his wife, and he feared her—two reasons for tyranny if the day should come when he discerned that his wife was so merciful as to affect indifference to his infidelities.

"I have analyzed his character to explain Béatrix's conduct. The Marquise used to admire me greatly; but there is but one step from admiration to jealousy. I have one of the most remarkable *salons* of Paris; she wished to have one, and tried to win away my circle. I have not the art of keeping those who wish to leave me. She has won such superficial persons as are everybody's friends from vacuity, and whose object is always to go out of a room as soon as they have come in; but she has not had time to make a circle. At that time I supposed that she was consumed with the desire of any kind of celebrity. Nevertheless, she had some greatness of soul, a royal pride, ideas, and a wonderful gift of apprehending and understanding everything. She will talk of metaphysics and of music, of theology and of painting. You will see her as a woman what we saw her as a bride; but she is not without a little conceit; she gives herself too much the air of knowing difficult things—Chinese or Hebrew, of having ideas about hieroglyphics, and of being able to explain the papyrus that wraps a mummy.

"Béatrix is one of those fair women by whom fair Eve

would look like a negress. She is as tall and straight as a taper, and as white as the holy wafer; she has a long, pointed face, and a very variable complexion, to-day as colorless as cambric, to-morrow dull and mottled under the skin with a myriad tiny specks, as though the blood had left dust there in the course of the night. Her forehead is grand, but a little too bold; her eyes, pale aquamarine-tinted, floating in the white cornea under colorless eyebrows and indolent lids. There is often a dark circle round her eyes. Her nose, curved to a quarter of a circle, is pinched at the nostrils and full of refinement, but it is impertinent. She has the Austrian mouth, the upper lip thicker than the lower, which has a scornful droop. Her pale cheeks only flush under some very strong emotion. Her chin is rather fat; mine is not thin; and perhaps I ought not to tell you that women with a fat chin are exacting in love affairs. She has one of the most beautiful figures I ever saw; a back of dazzling whiteness, which used to be very flat, but which now, I am told, has filled out and grown dimpled; but the bust is not so fine as the shoulders, her arms are still thin. However, she has a mien and a freedom of manner which redeem all her defects and throw her beauties into relief. Nature has bestowed on her that air, as of a princess, which can never be acquired, which becomes her, and at once reveals the woman of birth; it is in harmony with the slender hips of exquisite form, with the prettiest foot in the world, and the abundant angel-like hair, resembling waves of light, such as Girodet's brush has so often painted.

"Without being faultlessly beautiful or pretty, when she chooses, she can make an indelible impression. She has only to dress in cherry-colored velvet, with lace frillings, and red roses in her hair, to be divine. If on any pretext Béatrix could dress in the costume of a time when women wore pointed stomachers laced with ribbon, rising, slender and fragile-looking, from the padded fulness of brocade skirts set in thick, deep pleats; when their heads were framed in starched ruffs, and their arms hidden under slashed sleeves with lace

ruffles, out of which the hand appeared like the pistil from the cup of a flower; when their hair was tossed back in a thousand little curls over a knot held up by a network of jewels, Béatrix would appear as a successful rival to any of the ideal beauties you may see in that array."

Félicité showed Calyste a good copy of Mieris' picture, in which a lady in white satin stands singing with a gentleman of Brabant, while a negro pours old Spanish wine into a glass with a foot, and a housekeeper is arranging some biscuits.

"Fair women," she went on, "have the advantage over us dark women of the most delightful variety; you may be fair in a hundred ways, but there is only one way of being dark. Fair women are more womanly than we are; we dark Frenchwomen are too like men. Well," she added, "do not be falling in love with Béatrix on the strength of the portrait I have given you, exactly like some prince in the *Arabian Nights*. Too late in the day, my dear boy! But be comforted. With her the bones are for the first comer."

She spoke with meaning; the admiration expressed in the youth's face was evidently more for the picture than for the painter whose touch had missed its purpose.

"In spite of her being a blonde," she resumed, "Béatrix has not the delicacy of her coloring; the lines are severe, she is elegant and hard; she has the look of a strictly accurate drawing, and you might fancy she had southern fires in her soul. She is a flaming angel, slowly drying up. Her eyes look thirsty. Her front face is the best; in profile her face looks as if it had been flattened between two doors. You will see if I am wrong.

"This is what led to our being such intimate friends: For three years, from 1828 to 1831, Béatrix, while enjoying the last gaieties of the Restoration, wandering through drawing-rooms, going to court, gracing the fancy-dress balls at the Elysée Bourbon, was judging men, things, and events from the heights of her intellect. Her mind was fully occupied. This first bewilderment at seeing the world kept her

heart dormant, and it remained torpid under the first startling experiences of marriage—a baby—a confinement, and all the business of motherhood, which I cannot bear; I am not a woman so far as that is concerned. To me children are unendurable; they bring a thousand sorrows and incessant anxieties. I must say that I regard it as one of the blessings of modern society of which that hypocrite, Jean-Jacques, deprived us, that we were free to be or not to be mothers. Though I am not the only woman that thinks this, I am the only one to say it.

"During the storm of 1830 and 1831, Béatrix went to her husband's country house, where she was as much bored as a saint in his stall in Paradise. On her return to Paris, the Marquise thought, and perhaps rightly, that the Revolution, which in the eyes of most people was purely political, would be a moral revolution, too. The world to which she belonged had failed to reconstitute itself during the unlooked-for fifteen years of triumph under the Restoration, so it must crumble away under the steady battering ram of the middle class. She had understood Monsieur Lainé's great words, 'Kings are departing.' This opinion, I suspect, was not without its influence on her conduct.

"She sympathized intellectually with the new doctrines which, for three years after that July, swarmed into life like flies in the sunshine, and which turned many women's heads; but, like all the nobility, though she thought the new ideas magnificent, she wished to save the nobility. Finding no opening now for personal superiority, seeing the uppermost class again setting up the speechless opposition it had already shown to Napoleon—which, during the dominion of actions and facts, was the only attitude it could take, whereas, in a time of moral transition, it was equivalent to retiring from the contest—she preferred a happy life to this mute antagonism.

"When we began to breathe a little, the Marquise met at my house the man with whom I had thought to end my days—Gennaro Conti, the great composer, of Neapolitan

parentage, but born at Marseilles. Conti is a very clever fellow, and has gifts as a composer, though he can never rise to the highest rank. If we had not Meyerbeer and Rossini, he might perhaps have passed for a genius. He has this advantage over them, that he is as a singer what Paganini is on the violin, Liszt on the piano, Taglioni as a dancer—in short, what the famous Garat was, of whom he reminds those who ever heard that singer. It is not a voice, my dear boy, it is a soul. When that singing answers to certain ideas, certain indescribable moods in which a woman sometimes finds herself, if she hears Gennaro, she is lost.—The Marquise fell madly in love with him and won him from me. It was excessively provincial, but fair warfare. She gained my esteem and friendship by her conduct towards me. She fancied I was the woman to fight for my possession; she could not tell that in my eyes the most ridiculous thing in the world under such circumstances is the subject of the contest. She came to see me. The woman, proud as she is, was so much in love that she betrayed her secret and left me mistress of her fate. She was quite charming; in my eyes she remained a woman and a marquise.

"I may tell you, my friend, that women are sometimes bad; but they have a secret greatness which men will never be able to appreciate. And so, as I may wind up my affairs as a woman on the brink of old age, which is awaiting me, I will tell you that I had been faithful to Conti, that I should have continued faithful till death, and that, nevertheless, I knew him thoroughly. He has apparently a delightful nature; at bottom he is detestable. In matters of feeling he is a charlatan.

"There are men, like Nathan, of whom I have spoken to you, who are charlatans on the surface, but honest. Such men lie to themselves. Perched on stilts, they fancy that they are on their feet, and play their tricks with a sort of innocence; their vanity is in their blood; they are born actors, swaggerers, grotesquely funny, like a Chinese jar; they might even laugh at themselves. Their personal im-

pulses are generous, and, like the gaudiness of Murat's royal costume, they attract danger.

"But Conti's rascality will never be known to any one but his mistress. He has as an artist that famous Italian jealousy which led Carlone to assassinate Piola, and cost Paësiello a stiletto thrust. This terrible envy is hidden beneath the most charming good-fellowship. Conti has not the courage of his vice; he smiles at Meyerbeer and pays him compliments, while he longs to rend him. He feels himself weak, and gives himself the airs of force; and his vanity is such that he affects the sentiments furthest from his heart. He assumes to be an artist inspired direct from Heaven. To him Art is something sacred and holy. He is a fanatic; he is sublime in his fooling of fashionable folk; his eloquence seems to flow from the deepest convictions. He is a seer, a demon, a god, an angel. In short, though I have warned you, Calyste, you will be his dupe. This southerner, this seething artist, is as cold as a well-rope.

"You listen to him; the artist is a missionary, Art is a religion that has its priesthood and must have its martyrs. Once started, Gennaro mounts to the most disheveled pathos that ever a German philosopher spouted out on his audience. You admire his convictions—he believes in nothing. He carries you up to Heaven by a song that seems to be some mysterious fluid, flowing with love; he gives you a glance of ecstasy; but he keeps an eye on your admiration; he is asking himself, 'Am I really a god to these people?' And in the same instant he is perhaps saying to himself, 'I have eaten too much macaroni.' You fancy he loves you—he hates you; and you do not know why. But I always knew. He had seen some woman the day before, loved her for a whim, insulted me with false love, with hypocritical kisses, making me pay dearly for his feigned fidelity. In short, he is insatiable for applause; he shams everything, and trifles with everything; he can act joy as well as grief, and he succeeds to perfection. He can please, he is loved, he can get admiration whenever he chooses.

"I left him hating his voice; he owed it more success than he could get from his talent as a composer; and he would rather be a man of genius like Rossini than a performer as fine as Rubini. I had been so foolish as to attach myself to him, and I would have decked the idol till the last. Conti, like many artists, is very dainty, and likes his ease and his little enjoyments; he is dandified, elegant, well dressed; well, I humored all his manias; I loved that weak but astute character. I was envied, and I sometimes smiled with disdain. I respected his courage; he is brave, and bravery, it is said, is the only virtue which no hypocrisy can simulate. On one occasion, when traveling, I saw him put to the test; he was ready to risk his life—and he loves it; but, strange to say, in Paris I have known him guilty of what I call mental cowardice.

"My dear boy, I knew all this. I said to the poor Marquise, 'You do not know what a gulf you are setting foot in; you are the Perseus of a hapless Andromeda; you are rescuing me from the rock. If he loves you, so much the better; but I doubt it; he loves no one but himself.'

"Gennaro was in the seventh heaven of pride. I was no marquise; I was not born a Casteran; I was forgotten in a day. I allowed myself the fierce pleasure of studying this character to its depths. Certain of what the end would be, I meant to watch Conti's contortions. My poor boy, in one week I saw horrors of sentimentality, hideous manœuvring! I will tell you no more; you will see the man here. Only, as he knows that I know him, he hates me now. If he could safely stab me, I should not be alive for two seconds.

"I have never said a word of this to Béatrix. Gennaro's last and constant insult is that he believes me capable of communicating my painful knowledge to the Marquise. He has become restless and absent-minded, for he cannot believe in good feeling in any one. He still performs for my benefit the part of a man grieved to have deserted me. You will find him full of the most penetrating cordiality; he will wheedle, he will be chivalrous. To him every woman is a

Madonna! You have to live with him for some time before you detect the secret of that false frankness, or know the stiletto prick of his humbug. His air of conviction would take in God. And so you will be enmeshed by his feline blandishments, and will never conceive of the deep and rapid arithmetic of his inmost mind.—Let him be.

"I carried indifference to the point of receiving them together at my house. The consequence of this was that the most suspicious world on earth, the world of Paris, knew nothing of the intrigue. Though Gennaro was drunk with pride, he wanted, no doubt, to pose before Béatrix; his dissimulation was consummate. He surprised me; I had expected to find that he insisted on a stage-effect. It was she who compromised herself, after a year of happiness, under all the vicissitudes and risks of Parisian existence.

"She had not seen Gennaro for some days, and I had invited him to dine with me, as she was coming in the evening. Rochefide had no suspicions; but Béatrix knew her husband so well, that, as she often told me, she would have preferred the worst poverty to the wretched life that awaited her in the event of that man ever having a right to scorn or to torment her. I had chosen the evening when our friend, the Comtesse de Montcornet, was at home. After seeing her husband served with his coffee, Béatrix left the drawing-room to dress, though she was not in the habit of getting ready so early.

"'Your hairdresser is not here yet,' said Rochefide, when he heard why she was going.

"'Thérèse can do my hair,' she replied.

"'Why, where are you going? You cannot go to Madame de Montcornet's at eight o'clock.'

"'No,' said she, 'but I shall hear the first act at the Italian Opera.'

"The catechizing bailiff in Voltaire's *Huron* is a silent man by comparison with an idle husband. Béatrix fled, to be no further questioned, and did not hear her husband say, 'Very well; we will go together.'

"He did not do it on purpose; he had no reason to suspect his wife; she was allowed so much liberty! He tried never to fetter her in any way; he prided himself on it. And, indeed, her conduct did not offer the smallest hold for the strictest critic. The Marquis was going who knows where—to see his mistress, perhaps. He had dressed before dinner; he had only to take up his hat and gloves when he heard his wife's carriage draw up under the awning of the steps in the courtyard. He went to her room and found her ready, but amazed at seeing him.

" 'Where are you going?' said she.

" 'Did I not tell you I would go with you to the Opera?'

"The Marquise controlled the outward expression of intense annoyance; but her cheeks turned as scarlet as though she had used rouge.

" 'Well, come then,' she replied.

"Rochefide followed her, without heeding the agitation betrayed by her voice; she was burning with the most violent suppressed rage.

" 'To the Opera,' said her husband.

" 'No,' cried Béatrix, 'to Mademoiselle des Touches'. I have a word to say to her,' she added, when the door was shut.

"The carriage started.

" 'But if you like,' Béatrix added, 'I can take you first to the Opera and go to her afterwards.'

" 'No,' said the Marquis; 'if you have only a few words to say to her, I will wait in the carriage; it is only half-past seven.'

"If Béatrix had said to her husband, 'Go to the Opera and leave me alone,' he would have obeyed her quite calmly. Like every clever woman, knowing herself guilty, she was afraid of rousing his suspicions, and resigned herself. Thus, when she gave up the Opera to come to my house, her husband accompanied her. She came in scarlet with rage and impatience. She walked straight up to me, and said in a low voice, with the calmest manner in the world:

" 'My dear Félicité, I shall start for Italy to-morrow even-



At the unexpected sight, Calyste and Félicité sat silent for a minute



ing with Conti; beg him to make his arrangements, and wait for me here with a carriage and passport.'

"Then she left with her husband.—Violent passions insist on liberty at any cost. Béatrix had for a year been suffering from want of freedom and the rarity of their meetings, for she considered herself one with Gennaro. So nothing could surprise me. In her place, with my temper, I should have acted as she did. Conti's happiness broke my heart; only his vanity was engaged in this matter.

"'That is, indeed, being loved!' he exclaimed, in the midst of his transports. 'How few women would thus forego their whole life, their fortune, their reputation!'

"'Oh, yes, she loves you,' said I; 'but you do not love her!'

"He flew into a fury and made a scene; he harangued, he scolded, he described his passion, saying he had never thought it possible that he could love so much. I was immovably cool, and lent him the money he might want for the journey that had taken him by surprise.

"Béatrix wrote a letter to her husband, and set out for Italy the next evening. She stayed there two years; she wrote to me several times. Her letters are bewitchingly friendly; the poor child clings to me as the only woman that understands her. She tells me she adores me. Want of money compelled Gennaro to write an opera; he did not find in Italy the pecuniary resources open to a composer in Paris.—Here is her last letter; you can understand it now if, at your age, you can analyze the emotions of the heart," she added, handing him the letter.

At this moment Claude Vignon came in. At the unexpected sight, Calyste and Félicité sat silent for a minute, she from surprise, he from vague dissatisfaction. Claude's vast, high, and wide forehead, bald at seven-and-thirty, was dark with clouds. His firm, judicious lips expressed cold irony. Claude Vignon is an imposing person, in spite of the changes in a face that was splendid and is now grown livid. From the age of eighteen to five-and-twenty he had a strong like-

ness to the divine young Raphael; but his nose, the human feature which most readily alters, has grown sharp; his countenance has, as it were, sunk under mysterious hollows, the outlines have grown puffy, and with a bad color; leaden grays predominate in the worn complexion, though no one knows what the fatigues can be of a young man, aged, perhaps, by crushing loneliness, and an abuse of keen discernment. He is always examining other men's minds, without object or system; the pickaxe of his criticism is always destroying, and never constructing anything. His weariness is that of the laborer, not of the architect.

His eyes, light blue and once bright, are dimmed with unconfessed suffering, or clouded by sullen sadness. Dissipation has darkened the eyelids beneath the brows; the temples have lost their smoothness. The chin, most nobly moulded, has grown double without dignity. His voice, never very sonorous, has grown thin; it is not hoarse, not husky, but something between the two. The inscrutability of this fine face, the fixity of that gaze, cover an irresolution and weakness that are betrayed in the shrewd and ironical smile. This weakness affects his actions, but not his mind; the stamp of encyclopædic intellect is on that brow and in the habit of that face, at once child-like and lofty.

One detail may help to explain the eccentricities of this character. The man is tall and already somewhat bent, like all who bear a world of ideas. These tall, long frames have never been remarkable for tenacious energy, for creative activity. Charlemagne, Narses, Belisarius, and Constantine have been, in this particular, very noteworthy exceptions. Claude Vignon, no doubt, suggests mysteries to be solved. In the first place, he is at once very simple and very deep. Though he rushes into excess with the readiness of a courtesan, his mind remains unclouded. The intellect which can criticise art, science, literature, and politics is inadequate to control his outer life. Claude contemplates himself in the wide extent of his intellectual realm, and gives up the form of things with Diogenes-like indifference. Content with see-

ing into everything, understanding everything, he scorns material details; but, being beset with hesitancy as soon as creation is needed, he sees obstacles without being carried away by beauties, and by dint of discussing means, he sits, his hands hanging idle, producing no results. Intellectually he is a Turk in whom meditation induces sleep. Criticism is his opium, and his harem of books has disgusted him with any work he might do.

He is equally indifferent to the smallest and to the greatest things, and is compelled by the mere weight of his brain to throw himself into debauchery to abdicate for a little while the irresistible power of his omnipotent analysis. He is too much absorbed by the seamy side of genius, and you may now conceive that Camille Maupin should try to show him the right side.

The task was a fascinating one. Claude Vignon believed himself no less great as a politician than he was as a writer; but this Machiavelli of private life laughs in his sleeve at ambitious persons, he knows all he can ever know, he instinctively measures his future life by his faculties, he sees himself great, he looks obstacles in the face, perceives the folly of parvenus, takes fright, or is disgusted, and lets the time slip by without doing anything. Like Étienne Lousteau, the feuilleton writer; like Nathan, the famous dramatic author; like Blondet, another journalist, he was born in the middle class to which we owe most of our great writers.

"Which way did you come?" said Mademoiselle des Touches, coloring with pleasure or surprise.

"In at the door," replied Claude Vignon, drily.

"Well," she replied, with a shrug, "I know you are not a man to come in at the window."

"Scaling a balcony is a sort of cross of honor for the beloved fair."

"Enough!" said Félicité.

"I am in the way?" said Claude Vignon.

"Monsieur," said the guileless Calyste, "this letter——"

"Keep it; I ask no questions. At our age such things

need no words," said he, in a satirical tone, interrupting Calyste.

"But, indeed, monsieur——" Calyste began, indignantly.

"Be calm, young man; my indulgence for feelings is boundless."

"My dear Calyste," said Camille, anxious to speak.

"Dear?" said Vignon, interrupting her.

"Claude is jesting," Camille went on, addressing Calyste, "and he is wrong—with you who know nothing of Paris and its 'chaff.'"

"I had no idea that I was funny," said Vignon, very gravely.

"By what road did you come? For two hours I have never ceased looking out towards le Croisic."

"You were not incessantly looking," replied Vignon.

"You are intolerable with your banter."

"Banter! I?"

Calyste rose.

"You are not so badly off here that you need leave," said Vignon.

"On the contrary," said the indignant youth, to whom Camille gave her hand, which he kissed instead of merely taking it, and left on it a scalding tear.

"I wish I were that little young man," said the critic, seating himself, and taking the end of the hookah. "How he will love!"

"Too much, for then he will not be loved," said Mademoiselle des Touches. "Madame de Rochefide is coming here."

"Good!" said Claude; "and with Conti?"

"She will stay here alone, but he is bringing her."

"Have they quarreled?"

"No."

"Play me a sonata by Beethoven; I know nothing of the music he has written for the piano."

Claude filled the bowl of the hookah with tobacco, watching Camille more closely than she knew; a hideous idea

possessed him; he fancied that a straightforward woman believed she had duped him. The situation was a new one.

Calyste, as he went away, was thinking neither of Béatrix de Rochefide nor her letter; he was furious with Claude Vignon, full of wrath at what he thought want of delicacy, and of pity for poor Félicité. How could a man be loved by that perfect woman and not worship her on his knees, not trust her on the faith of a look or a smile? After being the privileged spectator of the suffering Félicité had endured while waiting, he felt an impulse to rend that pale, cold spectre. He knew nothing himself, as Félicité had told him, of the sort of deceptive witticisms in which the satirists of the press excel. To him love was a human form of religion.

On seeing him cross the courtyard, his mother could not restrain a joyful exclamation, and old Mademoiselle du Guénic whistled for Mariotte.

"Mariotte, here is the child; give us the *lubine*."

"I saw him, mademoiselle," replied the cook.

His mother, a little distressed by the melancholy that sat on Calyste's brow, never suspecting that it was caused by what he thought Vignon's bad treatment of Félicité, took up her worsted work. The old aunt pulled out her knitting. The Baron gave up his easy-chair to his son, and walked up and down the room as if to unstiffen his legs before taking a turn in the garden. No Flemish or Dutch picture represents an interior of richer tone, or furnished with more happily suitable figures. The handsome youth, dressed in black velvet, the mother, still so handsome, and the two old folks, in the setting of ancient paneling, were the expression of the most domestic harmony.

Fanny longed to question Calyste, but he had taken Béatrix's letter out of his pocket—the letter which was, perhaps, to destroy all the happiness this noble family enjoyed. As he unfolded it, Calyste's lively imagination called up the Marquise dressed as Camille Maupin had fantastically described her.

From Béatrix to Félicité.

"GENOA, *July 2nd.*

"I have not written to you, my dear friend, since our stay at Florence, but Venice and Rome took up all my time; and happiness, as you know, fills a large place in life. We are neither of us likely to take strict account of a letter more or less. I am a little tired; I insisted on seeing everything, and to a mind not easily satiated the repetition of pleasures brings fatigue. Our friend had great triumphs at the Scala, at the Fenice, and these last three days at the San Carlo. Three Italian operas in two years! You cannot say that love has made him idle.

"We have been warmly welcomed everywhere, but I should have preferred silence and solitude. Is not that the only mode of life that suits a woman in direct antagonism with the world? This was what I had expected. Love, my dear, is a more exacting master than marriage; but it is sweet to serve him. After having played at love all my life, I did not know that I must see the world again, even in glimpses, and the attentions paid me on all hands were so many wounds. I was no longer on an equal footing with women of the highest type. The more kindly I was treated, the more was my inferiority marked. Gennaro did not understand these subtleties, but he was so happy that I should have been graceless if I had not sacrificed such petty vanities to a thing so splendid as an artist's life.

"We live only by love, while men live by love and action—otherwise they would not be men. There are, however, immense disadvantages to a woman in the position in which I have placed myself; and you have avoided them. You have remained great in the face of the world which had no rights over you; you have perfect liberty, and I have lost mine. I am speaking only with reference to concerns of the heart, and not to social matters, which I have wholly sacrificed. You might be vain and wilful, you might have all the graces of a woman in love, who can give or refuse anything as she chooses; you had preserved the privilege

of being capricious, even in the interest of your affection and of the man you might like. In short, you, even now, have still your own sanction; I have not the freedom of feeling, which, as I think, it is always delightful to assert in love, even when the passion is an eternal one. I have not the right to quarrel in jest, which we women so highly and so rightly prize; is it not the line by which we sound the heart? I dare not threaten, I must rely for attractiveness on infinite docility and sweetness, I must be impressive through the immenseness of my love; I would rather die than give up Gennaro, for the holiness of my passion is its only plea for pardon.

"I did not hesitate between my social dignity and my own little dignity—a secret between me and my conscience. Though I have fits of melancholy, like the clouds which float across the clearest sky, to which we women like to give way, I silence them at once; they would look like regret. Dear me! I so fully understood the extent of my debt to him, that I have equipped myself with unlimited indulgence; but hitherto Gennaro has not roused my sensitive jealousy. Indeed, I cannot see how my dear great genius can do wrong. I am, my dear, rather like the devotees who argue with their God, for is it not to you that I owe my happiness? And you cannot doubt that I have often thought of you.

"At last I have seen Italy! As you saw it, as it ought to be seen, illuminated to the soul by love, as it is by its glorious sun and its masterpieces of art. I pity those who are incessantly fired by the admiration it calls for at every step when they have not a hand to clasp, a heart into which they may pour the overflow of emotions which then subside as they grow deeper. These two years are to me all my life, and my memory will have reaped a rich harvest. Did you not, as I did, dream of settling at Chiavari, of buying a palace at Venice, a villa at Sorrento, a house at Florence? Do not all women who love shun the world? And I, for ever an outcast, could I help longing to bury myself in a lovely landscape, in a heap of flowers, looking out on the pretty

sea, or a valley as good as the sea, like the valley you look on from Fiesole?

"But, alas, we are poor artists, and want of money is dragging the wanderers back to Paris again. Gennaro cannot bear me to feel that I have left all my luxury, and he is bringing a new work, a grand opera, to be rehearsed in Paris. Even at the cost of my love, I cannot bear to meet one of those looks from a woman or a man which would make me feel murderous. Yes! for I could hack any one to pieces who should condescend to pity me, should offer me the protection of patronage—like that enchanting Châteauneuf, who, in the time of Henri III., I think, spurred her horse to trample down the Provost of Paris for some such offence.

"So I am writing to tell you that without delay I shall arrive to join you at les Touches, and wait for our Gennaro in that quiet spot. You see how bold I am with my benefactress and sister. Still, the magnitude of the obligation will not betray my heart, like some others, into ingratitude.

"You have told me so much about the difficulties of the journey that I shall try to reach le Croisic by sea. This idea occurred to me on hearing that there was here a little Danish vessel, loaded with marble, which will put in at le Croisic to take up salt on its way back to the Baltic. By this voyage I shall avoid the fatigue and expense of traveling by post. I know you are not alone, and I am glad of it; I had some remorse in the midst of my happiness. You are the only person with whom I could bear to be alone without Conti. Will it not be a pleasure to you, too, to have a woman with you who will understand your happiness and not be jealous of it?

"Well, till our meeting! The wind is fair, and I am off, sending you a kiss."

"Well, well, she, too, knows how to love!" said Calyste to himself, folding up the letter with a sad expression.

This sadness flashed on his mother's heart like a gleam

lighting up an abyss. The Baron had just left the room. Fanny bolted the door to the turret, and returned to lean over the back of the chair in which her boy was sitting, as Dido's sister bends over her in Guérin's picture. She kissed his forehead and said:

"What is the matter, my child? what makes you unhappy? You promised to account to me for your constant visits to les Touches; I ought to bless its mistress, you say?"

"Yes, indeed," he replied. "She, my dear mother, has shown me all the defects of my education in these times, when men of noble birth must acquire personal merit if they are to restore their names to life again. I was as remote from my day as Guérande is from Paris. She has been, in a way, the mother of my intelligence."

"Not for that can I bless her!" said the Baroness, her eyes filling with tears.

"Mother," cried Calyste, on whose forehead the hot tears fell, drops of heartbroken motherhood, "mother, do not cry. Just now, when, to do her a pleasure, I proposed scouring the coast from the custom-house hut to the Bourg de Batz, she said to me, 'How anxious your mother would be!' "

"She said so! Then I can forgive her much," said Fanny.

"Félicité wishes me well," replied Calyste, "and she often checks herself from saying some of those hasty and doubtful things which artists let fall, so as not to shake my faith—knowing that it is not immovable. She has told me of the life led in Paris by youths of the highest rank, going from their country homes, as I might from mine, leaving their family without any fortune, and making great wealth by the force of their will and their intelligence. I can do what the Baron de Rastignac has done, and he is in the Ministry.—She gives me lessons on the piano, she teaches me Italian, she has let me into a thousand social secrets of which no one has an inkling at Guérande. She could not give me the treasures of her love; she gives me those of her vast intellect, her wit, her genius. She does not choose to be a mere pleasure, but a light to me; she offends none of my creeds; she believes in the nobility, she loves Brittany——"

"She has changed our Calyste," said the old blind woman, interrupting him, "for I understand nothing of this talk. You have a fine old house over your head, nephew, old relations who worship you, good, old servants; you can marry a good little Bretonne, a pious and well-bred girl who will make you happy, and you can reserve your ambitions for your eldest son, who will be three times as rich as you are if you are wise enough to live quietly and economically, in the shade and in the peace of the Lord, so as to redeem the family estates. That is as simple as a Breton heart. You will get rich less quickly, but far more surely."

"Your aunt is right, my darling; she cares as much for your happiness as I do. If I should not succeed in arranging your marriage with Miss Margaret, your uncle, Lord Fitz-William's daughter, it is almost certain that Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël will leave her money to either of her nieces you may prefer."

"And there will be a few crown pieces here!" said the old aunt in a low, mysterious voice.

"I! Marry at my age?" said he, with one of those looks which weaken a mother's reason. "Am I to have no sweet and crazy love-making? Am I never to tremble, thrill, flutter, fear, lie down under a pitiless gaze and presently melt it? May I never know the beauty that is free, the fancy of the soul, the clouds that fleet over the serene blue of happiness and that the breath of enjoyment blows away? May I never stand under a gutter spout without discovering that it is raining, like the lovers seen by Diderot? Shall I never hold a burning coal in the palm of my hand like the Duc de Lorraine? Shall I never climb a silken rope-ladder, nor cling to a rotten, old trellis without feeling it yield? Am I never to hide in a closet or under a bed? Can I know nothing of woman but wifely surrender, or of love but its equable lamplight? Is all my curiosity to be satiated before it is excited? Am I to live without ever feeling that fury of the heart which adds to a man's power? Am I to be a married monk?—No! I have set my teeth in the Paris

apple of civilization. Do you not perceive that by your chaste, your ignorant family habits you have laid the fire that is consuming me, and that I shall be burnt up before I can adore the divinity I see wherever I turn—in the green foliage and in the sand glowing in the sunshine, and in all the beautiful, lordly, and elegant women who are described in the books and poems I have devoured at Camille's? Alas! There is but one such woman in all Guérande, and that is you, mother! The lovely Blue Birds of my dreams come from Paris; they live in the pages of Lord Byron and Scott; they are Parisina, Effie, Minna! Or, again, that Royal Duchess I saw in the moors among the heath and broom, whose beauty sent my blood with a rush to the heart!"

These thoughts were clearer, more brilliant, more living, to the Baroness' eye, than art can make them to the reader; she saw them in a flash shot from the boy's glance like the arrows from a quiver that is upset. Though she had never read Beaumarchais, she thought, as any woman would, that it would be a crime to make this Cherubino marry.

"Oh, my dear boy!" said she, taking him in her arms, pressing him to her, and kissing his beautiful hair—still her own—marry when you please, only be happy. It is not my part to tease you."

Mariotte came to lay the table. Gasselin had gone out to exercise Calyste's horse, for he had not ridden it these two months. The three women, the mother, the aunt, and Mariotte, were of one mind, with the natural cunning of women, to make much of Calyste when he dined at home. Breton penuriousness, fortified by the memories and habits of childhood, tried to contend with the civilization of Paris so faithfully represented at les Touches, so close to Guérande. Mariotte tried to disgust her young master with the elaborate dishes prepared in Camille Maupin's kitchen, as his mother and aunt vied with each other in attentions to enmesh their child in the nets of their tenderness, and to make comparisons impossible.

"Ah, ha! You have a *lubine* (a sort of fish), Monsieur

Calyste, and snipe, and pancakes such as you will never get anywhere but here," said Mariotte, with a knowing and triumphant air, as she looked down on the white cloth, a perfect sheet of snow.

After dinner, when his old aunt had settled down to her knitting again, when the curé of Guérande and the Chevalier du Halga came in, attracted by their game of *mouche,* Calyste went out to go back to les Touches, saying he must return Béatrix's letter.

Claude Vignon and Mademoiselle des Touches were still at table. The great critic had a tendency to greediness, and this vice was humored by Félicité, who knew how a woman makes herself indispensable by such attentions.

The dining-room, lately finished by considerable additions, showed how readily and how quickly a woman can marry the nature, adopt the profession, the passions, and the tastes of the man she loves, or means to love. The table had the rich and dazzling appearance which modern luxury, seconded by the improvements in manufactures, stamps on every detail. The noble but impoverished house of du Guénic knew not the antagonist with whom it had to do battle, nor how large a sum was needed to contend with the brand-new plate brought from Paris by Mademoiselle des Touches, with her china—thought good enough for the country—her fine linen, her silver gilt, all the trifles on her table, and all the skill of her man cook.

Calyste declined to take any of the liqueurs contained in one of the beautiful inlaid cases of precious woods, that might be shrines.

"Here is your letter," he said, with childish ostentation, looking at Claude, who was sipping a glass of West Indian liqueur.

"Well, what do you think of it?" asked Mademoiselle des Touches, tossing the letter across the table to Vignon, who read it, alternately lifting and setting down his glass.

"Why—that the women of Paris are very happy; they all have men of genius, who love them, to worship."

"Dear me, you are still but a rustic!" said Félicité, with a laugh. "What! You did not discover that she already loves him less, that——"

"It is self-evident!" said Claude Vignon, who had as yet read no more than the first page. "When a woman is really in love, does she trouble her head in the least about her position? Is she as finely observant as the Marquise? Can she calculate? Can she distinguish? Our dear Béatrix is tied to Conti by her pride; she is condemned to love him, come what may."

"Poor woman!" said Camille.

Calyste sat staring at the table, but he saw nothing. The beautiful creature in her fantastic costume, as sketched by Félicité that morning, rose before him, radiant with light; she smiled on him, she played with her fan, and her other hand, emerging from a frill of lace and cherry-colored velvet, lay white and still on the full folds of her magnificent petticoat.

"This is the very thing for you," said Claude Vignon, with a sardonic smile at Calyste.

Calyste was offended at the words *the very thing.*

"Do not suggest the idea of such an intrigue to the dear child; you do not know how dangerous such a jest may be. I know Béatrix; she has too much magnanimity of temper to change; besides, Conti will be with her."

"Ah!" said Claude Vignon, satirically, "a little twinge of jealousy, heh?"

"Can you suppose it?" said Camille, proudly.

"You are more clear-sighted than a mother could be," replied Claude.

"But, I ask you, is it possible?" and she looked at Calyste.

"And yet," Vignon went on, "they would be well matched. She is ten years older than he is; he would be the girl."

"A girl, monsieur, who has twice been under fire in la Vendée. If there had but been twenty thousand of such girls——"

"I was singing your praise," said Vignon, "an easier matter than singeing your beard."

"I have a sword to cut the beards of those who wear them too long," retorted Calyste.

"And I have a tongue that cuts sharply, too," replied Vignon, smiling. "We are Frenchmen—the affair can be arranged."

Mademoiselle des Touches gave Calyste a beseeching look, which calmed him at once.

"Why," said Félicité, to end the discussion, "why is it that youths, like my Calyste there, always begin by loving women no longer young?"

"I know of no more guileless and generous impulse," said Vignon. "It is the consequence of the delightful qualities of youth. And besides, to what end would old women come if it were not for such love? You are young and handsome, and will be for twenty years to come; before you we may speak plainly," he went on, with a keen glance at Mademoiselle des Touches. "In the first place, the semi-dowagers to whom very young men attach themselves know how to love far better than young women. A youth is too like a woman for a young woman to attract him. Such a passion is too suggestive of the myth of Narcissus. Besides this, there is, I believe, a common want of experience which keeps them asunder. Hence the reason which makes it true that a young woman's heart can only be understood by a man in whom long practice is veiled by his real or assumed passion, is the same as that which, allowing for differences of nature, makes a woman past her youth more seductive to a boy; he is intensely conscious that he shall succeed with her, and the woman's vanity is intensely flattered by his pursuit of her.

"Then, again, it is natural that the young should seize on fruit, and autumn offers many fine and luscious kinds. Is it nothing to meet those looks, at once bold and reserved, languishing at the proper moments, soft with the last gleams of love, so warm, so soothing? And the elaborate elegance of speech, the splendid ripe shoulders so finely filled out, the ample roundness, the rich and undulating plumpness, the hands full of dimples, the pulpy, well-nourished skin, the

brow full of overflowing sentiment, on which the light lingers, the hair, so carefully cherished and dressed, where fine partings of white skin are delicately traced, and the throat with those fine curves, the inviting nape, where every resource of art is applied to bring out the contrast between the hair and the tones of the flesh, to emphasize all the audacity of life and love? Dark women then get some of the tones of the fairest, the amber shade of maturity.

"Then, again, these women betray their knowledge of the world in their smiles, and display it in their conversation; they know how to talk; they will set the whole world before you to raise a smile; they have sublime touches of dignity and pride; they can shriek with despair in a way to break your heart, wail a farewell to love, knowing that it is futile, and only resuscitates passion; they grow young again by dint of varying the most desperately simple things. They constantly expected to be contradicted as to the falling off they so coquettishly proclaim, and the intoxication of their triumph is contagious. Their devotion is complete; they listen, in short, they love; they clutch at love as a man condemned to death clings to the smallest trifles of living; they are like those lawyers who can urge every plea in a case without fatiguing the Court; they exhaust every means in their power; indeed, perfect love can only be known in them.

"I doubt if they are ever forgotten, any more than we can forget anything vast and sublime.

"A young woman has a thousand other things to amuse her, these women have nothing; they have no conceit left, no vanity, no meanness; their love is the Loire at its mouth, immense, swelled by every disenchantment, every affluent of life, and that is why—my daughter is dumb!" he ended, seeing Mademoiselle des Touches in an attitude of ecstasy, clutching Calyste's hand tightly, perhaps to thank him for having been the cause of such a moment for her, of such a tribute of praise that she could detect no snare in it.

All through the evening Claude Vignon and Félicité were brilliantly witty, telling anecdotes and describing the life of

Paris to Calyste, who quite fell in love with Claude, for wit exerts a peculiar charm on men of feeling.

"I should not be in the least surprised to see Madame de Rochefide land here to-morrow with Conti, who is accompanying her, no doubt," said Claude at the end of the evening. "When I came up from le Croisic, the seamen had spied a small ship, Danish, Swedish, or Norwegian."

This speech brought the color to Camille's cheeks, calm as she was.

That night, again, Madame du Guénic sat up for her son till one o'clock, unable to imagine what he could be doing at les Touches if Félicité did not love him.

"He must be in the way," thought this delightful mother.

"What have you had to talk about so long?" she asked, as she saw him come in.

"Oh, mother! I never spent a more delightful evening. Genius is a great, a most sublime thing! Why did you not bestow genius on me? With genius a man must be able to choose the woman he loves from all the world; she must inevitably be his!"

"But you are handsome, my Calyste."

"Beauty has no place but in women. And besides, Claude Vignon is fine. Men of genius have a brow that beams, eyes where lightnings play—and I, unhappy wretch, I only know how to love."

"They say that is all-sufficient, my darling," said she, kissing his forehead.

"Really, truly?"

"I have been told so. I have had no experience."

It was Calyste's turn to kiss his mother's hand with reverence.

"I will love for all those who might have been your adorers," said he.

"Dear child, it is in some degree your duty; you have inherited all my feelings. So do not be rash; try to love only high-souled women, if you must love."

What young man, welling over with passion and suppressed vitality, but would have had the triumphant idea of going to le Croisic to see Madame de Rochefide land, so as to be able to study her, himself unknown? Calyste greatly amazed his father and mother, who knew nothing of the fair Marquise's arrival, by setting out in the morning without waiting for breakfast. Heaven knows how briskly the boy stepped out. He felt as if some new strength had come to his aid, he was so light; he kept close under the walls of les Touches to avoid being seen. The delightful boy was ashamed of his ardor, and had perhaps a miserable fear of being laughed at; Félicité and Claude Vignon were so horribly keen-sighted! And, then, in such cases a youth believes that his forehead is transparent.

He followed the zigzag path across the maze of salt-marshes, reached the sands, and was across them with a skip and a hop, in spite of the scorching sun that twinkled on them.

This brought him to the edge of the strand, banked up with a breakwater, near which stands a house where travelers may find shelter from storms, sea-gales, rain, and the whirlwind. It is not always possible to cross the little strait, nor are there always boats, and it is convenient, while they are crossing from the port, to have shelter for the horses, asses, merchandise, or passengers' luggage. From thence men can scan the open sea and the port of le Croisic; and from thence Calyste soon discerned two boats coming, loaded with baggage—bundles, trunks, carpet-bags, and cases, of which the shape and size proclaimed to the natives the arrival of extraordinary things, such as could only belong to a voyager of distinction.

In one of these boats sat a young woman with a straw hat and green veil, accompanied by a man. This boat was the first to come to land. Calyste felt a thrill; but their appearance showed them to be a maid and a man-servant, and he dared not question them.

"Are you crossing to le Croisic, Monsieur Calyste?" asked

one of the boatmen, who knew him; but he replied only by a negative shake of the head, ashamed of having his name mentioned.

Calyste was enchanted at the sight of a trunk covered with waterproof canvas, on which he read *Madame la Marquise de Rochefide.* The name glittered in his eyes like some talisman; it had to him a purport of mysterious doom; he knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he should fall in love with this woman; the smallest things relating to her interested him already, spurred his fancy and his curiosity. Why?—In the burning desert of its immeasurable and objectless desires does not youth put forth all its powers towards the first woman who comes within reach? Béatrix had fallen heir to the love that Camille had disdained.

Calyste watched the landing of the luggage, looking out from time to time at le Croisic, hoping to see a boat come out of the harbor, cross to this little headland, and reveal to him the Béatrix who had already become to him what another Béatrix was to Dante, an eternal statue of marble on whose hands he would hang his flowers and wreaths. He stood with his arms folded, lost in the dream of expectancy. A thing worthy of remark, but which nevertheless has never been remarked, is the way in which we frequently subordinate our feelings to our will, how we pledge ourself to ourself, as it were, and how we make our fate; chance has certainly far less share in it than we suppose.

"I see no horses," said the maid, sitting on a trunk.

"And I see no carriage-road," said the valet.

"Well, horses have certainly been here," replied the woman, pointing to their traces. "Monsieur," said she, addressing Calyste, "is that the road leading to Guérande?"

"Yes," said he; "whom are you expecting?"

"We were told that we should be met, fetched to les Touches.—If they are very late, I do not know how Madame can dress," said she to the man. "You had better walk on to les Touches. What a land of savages!"

It dawned on Calyste that he was in a false position.

"Then your mistress is going to les Touches?" he asked.

"Mademoiselle came to meet her at seven this morning," was the reply. "Ah! here come the horses."

Calyste fled, running back to Guérande with the swiftness and lightness of a chamois, and doubling like a hare to avoid being seen by the servants from les Touches; still, he met two of them in the narrow way across the marsh which he had to cross.

"Shall I go in? Shall I not?" he asked himself as he saw the tops of the pine-trees of les Touches.

He was afraid; he returned to Guérande hang-dog and repentant, and walked up and down the Mall, where he continued the discussion with himself.

He started as he caught sight of les Touches, and studied the weather-cocks.

"She can have no idea of my excitement," said he to himself.

His wandering thoughts became so many grapnels that caught in his heart and held the Marquise there. Calyste had felt none of these terrors, these anticipatory joys with regard to Camille; he had first met her on horseback, and his desire had sprung up, as at the sight of a beautiful flower he might have longed to pluck. These vacillations constitute a sort of poem in a timid soul. Fired by the first flames of imagination, these souls rise up in wrath, are appeased, and eager by turns, and in silence and solitude reach the utmost heights of love before they have even spoken to the object of so many struggles.

Calyste saw from afar, on the Mall, the Chevalier du Halga, walking with Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël; he hid himself. The Chevalier and the old lady, believing themselves alone on the Mall, were talking aloud.

"Since Charlotte de Kergarouët is coming to you," said the Chevalier, "keep her three or four months. How can you expect her to flirt with Calyste? She never stays here long enough to attempt it; whereas, if they see each other every day, the two children will end by being desperately in

love, and you will see them married this winter. If you say two words of your plans to Charlotte, she will at once say four to Calyste; and a girl of sixteen will certainly win the day against a woman of forty-something!"

The two old folks turned to retrace their steps. Calyste heard no more, but he had understood what Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël's plan was. In his present frame of mind nothing could be more disastrous. Is it in the fever of a preconceived passion that a young man will accept as his wife a girl found for him by others? Calyste, who cared not a straw for Charlotte de Kergarouët, felt inclined to repulse her. Considerations of money could not touch him; he had been accustomed from childhood to the modest style of his father's house; besides, seeing Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël live as poorly as the Guénics themselves, he had no notion of her wealth. And a youth brought up as Calyste had been would not, in any case, consider anything but feeling; and all his mind was set on the Marquise.

Compared with the portrait drawn by Camille, what was Charlotte? The companion of his childhood, whom he treated as his sister.

He did not get home till five o'clock. When he went into the room, his mother, with a melancholy smile, handed him a note from Mademoiselle des Touches, as follows:—

"My dear Calyste,—The beautiful Marquise de Rochefide has arrived; we count on you to do honor to her advent. Claude, always satirical, declares that you will be Bice and she Dante. The honor of Brittany and of the Guénics is at stake when there is a Casteran to be welcomed. So let us meet soon.—Yours,

"Camille Maupin.

"Come as you are, without ceremony, or we shall look ridiculous."

Calyste showed his mother the note, and went at once.

"What are these Casterans?" said she to the Baron.

"An old Norman family, related to William the Conqueror," he replied. "Their arms are In tierce per fess azure gules and or, a horse rearing argent hoofed or.—The beautiful creature for whom le Gars was killed at Fougères in 1800 was the daughter of a Casteran who became a nun at Séez, and was made abbess after being thrown over by the Duc de Verneuil."

"And the Rochefides?"

"I do not know the name; I should want to see their arms," said he.

The Baroness was a little relieved at hearing that the Marquise Béatrix de Rochefide was of an old family; still, she felt some alarm at knowing that her son was exposed to fresh fascinations.

Calyste, as he walked, felt the most violent and yet delightful impulses; his throat was choked, his heart full, his brain confused; he was devoured by fever. He wanted to walk slower, but a superior power urged him on. All young men have known this perturbation of the senses caused by a vague hope: a subtle fire flames within and raises a halo, like the glory shown about the divine persons in a sacred picture, through which they see nature in a glow and woman radiant. Are they not then, like the saints themselves, full of faith, ardor, hope, and purity?

The young Breton found the whole party in Camille's little private drawing-room. It was by this time nearly six o'clock; through the windows the sinking sun shed a ruddy light, broken by the trees; the air was still, the room was full of the soft gloom that women love so well.

"Here is the member for Brittany," said Camille Maupin, smiling to her friend, as Calyste lifted the tapestry curtain over the door. "As punctual as a king!"

"You recognized his step?" said Claude Vignon to Mademoiselle des Touches.

Calyste bowed to the Marquise, who merely nodded to him; he had not looked at her. He shook hands with Claude Vignon, who offered him his hand.

"Here is the great man of whom you have heard so much, Gennaro Conti," Camille went on, without answering Claude Vignon.

She introduced to Calyste a man of middle height, thin and slender, with chestnut hair, eyes that were almost orange color, with a white, freckled skin, in short, so exactly the well-known head of Lord Byron, that it would be superfluous to describe it—but perhaps he held it better. Conti was not a little proud of this resemblance.

"I am delighted, being but one day at les Touches, to meet Monsieur," said Gennaro.

"It is my part to say as much to you," replied Calyste, with sufficient ease of manner.

"He is as handsome as an angel!" the Marquise said to Félicité. Calyste, standing between the divan and the two women, overheard the words, though spoken in a whisper. He moved to an armchair, and stole watchful looks at the Marquise. In the soft light of the setting sun he saw lounging on the divan, as though a sculptor had placed her in position, a white, sinuous figure which seemed to dazzle his sight. Félicité, without knowing it, had served her friend well by her description.

Béatrix was superior to the not too flattering portrait drawn by Camille. Was it not partly for the stranger's benefit that Béatrix had placed in her splendid hair bunches of blue cornflowers, which showed off the pale gleam of her ringlets, arranged to frame her face and flicker over her cheeks. Her eyes were set in circles darkened by fatigue, but only to the tone of the purest and most opalescent mother-of-pearl; her cheeks were as bright as her eyes. Under her white skin, as delicate as the silky lining of an egg-shell, life flushed in the purple blood. The finish of her features was exquisite; her brow seemed diaphanous. This fair and gentle head, finely set on a long neck of marvelous beauty, lent itself to the most varying expression.

Her waist, slight enough to span, had a bewitching grace; her bare shoulders gleamed in the twilight like a white ca-

mellia in black hair. The bosom, well supported, but covered with a clear handkerchief, showed two exquisitely enticing curves. The muslin dress—white flowered with blue, the wide sleeves, the bodice, pointed, and without any sash, the shoes with sandals crossed over fine thread stockings—all showed perfect knowledge of the arts of dress. Earrings of silver filagree, marvels of Genoese work which no doubt were coming into fashion, were admirably suited to the exquisite softness of the fair hair starred with cornflowers.

At a single eager glance Calyste took in all this beauty, which stamped itself on his soul. Béatrix, so fair, and Félicité, so dark, recalled the "Keepsake" contrasts, so much affected by English engravers and draughtsmen. They were woman's weakness and woman's strength in their utmost expression, a perfect antithesis. These two women could never be rivals; each had her empire. They were like a delicate pale periwinkle or lily by the side of a sumptuous and gorgeous red poppy, or a turquoise by a ruby. In an instant Calyste was possessed by a passion which crowned the secret working of his hopes, his fears, his doubts. Mademoiselle des Touches had roused his senses, Béatrix fired his mind and heart. The young Breton was conscious of the birth within himself of an all-conquering force that would respect nothing. And he shot at Conti a look of envy and hatred, gloomy, and full of alarms, a look he had never had for Claude Vignon.

Calyste called upon all his resolution to restrain himself, thinking, nevertheless, that the Turks were very right to keep their women shut up, and that such beautiful creatures should be forbidden to show themselves in their tempting witcheries to young men aflame with love. This hot hurricane was lulled as soon as Béatrix turned her eyes on him and her gentle voice made itself heard; the poor boy already feared her as he feared God.

The dinner-bell rang.

"Calyste, give your arm to the Marquise," said Mademoiselle des Touches, taking Conti on her right and Claude on her left, as she stood aside to let the young couple pass.

Thus to go down the old staircase of les Touches was to Calyste like a first battle; his heart failed him, he found nothing to say, a faint moisture stood on his brow and down his spine. His arm trembled so violently that at the bottom step the Marquise said to him:

"What is the matter?"

"Never," said he in a choked voice, "never in my life have I seen a woman so beautiful as you are, excepting my mother; and I cannot control my agitation."

"Why, have you not Camille Maupin here?"

"But what a difference!" said Calyste artlessly.

"Ha! Calyste," Félicité whispered in his ear; "did I not tell you that you would forget me as though I had never existed? Sit there, next her on her right, and Vignon on her left.—As for you, Gennaro, I keep you by me," she added, laughing; "we will keep an eye on her flirtations."

The accent in which Camille spoke struck Claude, who looked at her with the wily and apparently absent glance, which in him showed that he was observant. He never ceased watching Mademoiselle des Touches throughout dinner.

"Flirtations!" replied the Marquise, drawing off her gloves and showing her beautiful hands; "I have every excuse; on one side of me I have a poet," and she turned to Claude; "on the other poetry."

Gennaro bestowed on Calyste a gaze full of flattery.

By candle-light Béatrix looked even more beautiful than before. The pale gleam of the wax-lights cast a satin sheen on her forehead, set sparks in her gazelle-like eyes, and fell through her silky ringlets, making separate hairs shine like threads of gold. With a graceful movement she threw off her gauze scarf, uncovering her shoulders. Calyste could then see the delicate nape, as white as milk, with a deep hollow that parted into two, curving off towards each shoulder with a lovely and delusive symmetry. The changes of aspect in which pretty women indulge produce very little effect in the fashionable world, where every eye is blasé, but they commit fearful ravages in a soul as fresh as was Calyste's. This bust, so unlike

Camille's, revealed a perfectly different character in Béatrix. There could be seen pride of race, a tenacity peculiar to the aristocracy, and a certain hardness in that double muscle of the shoulder, which is perhaps the last surviving vestige of the conqueror's strength.

Calyste found it very difficult to seem to eat; he was full of nervous feelings, which took away his hunger. As in all young men, Nature was in the clutches of those throes which precede first love, and stamp it so deeply on the soul. At his age the ardor of the heart repressed by the ardor of the moral sense leads to an internal conflict, which accounts for the long, respectful hesitancy, the deep absorption of love, the absence of all self-interest,—all the peculiar attractions of youths whose heart and life are pure.

As he noted—by stealth, so as not to rouse Gennaro's jealous suspicions—all the details which make the Marquise de Rochefide so supremely beautiful, Calyste was oppressed by the majesty of the lady beloved; he felt himself shrink before the haughtiness of some of her glances, the imposing aspect of her face, overflowing with aristocratic self-consciousness, a pride, which women can express by slight movements, by airs of the head and a magnificent slowness of gesture, which are all less affected and less studied than might be supposed. There is a sentiment behind all these modes of expression. The ambiguous position in which Béatrix found herself, compelled her to keep a watch over herself, to be imposing without being ridiculous; and women of the highest stamp can all achieve this, though it is the rock on which ordinary women are wrecked.

Béatrix could guess from Félicité's looks all the secret adoration she inspired in her neighbor, and that it was unworthy of her to encourage it; so from time to time she bestowed on him a repellant glance that fell on him like an avalanche of snow. The unfortunate youth appealed to Mademoiselle des Touches by a gaze in which she felt the tears kept down in his heart by superhuman determination, and Félicité kindly asked him why he ate nothing. Calyste stuffed to order, and

made a feint of joining in the conversation. The idea of being tiresome instead of agreeable was unendurable, and hammered at his brain. He was all the more bashful because he saw, behind the Marquise's chair, the man-servant he had met in the morning on the jetty, who would no doubt report his curiosity.

Whether he were contrite or happy, Madame de Rochefide paid no attention to him. Mademoiselle des Touches had led her to talk of her journey in Italy, and she gave a very witty account of the point-blank fire of passion with which a little Russian diplomate at Florence had honored her, laughing at these little young men who fling themselves at a woman as a locust rushes on grass. She made Claude Vignon and Gennaro laugh, and Félicité also; but these darts of sarcasm went straight to Calyste's heart, who only heard words through the humming in his ears and brain. The poor boy made no vow, as some obstinate men have done, to win this woman at any cost; no, he was not angry, he was miserable. When he discerned in Béatrix an intention to sacrifice him at Gennaro's feet, he only said to himself—"If only I can serve her in any way!" and allowed himself to be trampled on with the meekness of a lamb.

"How is it," said Claude Vignon to the Marquise, "that you, who so much admire poetry, give it so bad a reception? Such artless admiration, so sweet in its expression, with no second thought, no reservation, is not that the poetry of the heart? Confess now that it gives you a sense of satisfaction and well-being."

"Certainly," she replied, "but we should be very unhappy and, above all, very worthless if we yielded to every passion we inspire."

"If you made no selection," said Conti, "we should not be so proud of being loved."

"When shall I be chosen and distinguished by a woman?" Calyste wondered to himself, restraining his agony of emotion with difficulty.

He reddened like a sufferer on whose wound a finger is laid. Mademoiselle des Touches was startled by the expression she

saw in Calyste's face, and tried to comfort him with a sympathizing look. Claude Vignon caught that look. From that moment the writer's spirits rose, and he vented his gaiety in sarcasms; he maintained that love lived only in desire, that most women were mistaken in their love, that they often loved for reasons unknown to the men and to themselves, that they sometimes wished to deceive themselves that the noblest of them were still insincere.

"Be content to criticise books, and do not criticise our feelings," said Camille, with an imperious flash.

The dinner ceased to be lively. Claude Vignon's satire had made both the women grave. Calyste was in acute torment in spite of the happiness of gazing at Béatrix. Conti tried to read Madame de Rochefide's eyes and guess her thoughts. When the meal was ended, Mademoiselle des Touches took Calyste's arm, left the other two men to the Marquise, and allowed them to lead the way, so as to say to the youth:

"My dear boy, if the Marquise falls in love with you, she will pitch Conti out of the window; but you are behaving in such a way as to tighten their bonds. Even if she were enchanted by your worship, could she take any notice of it? Command yourself."

"She is so hard on me, she will never love me," said Calyste; "and if she does not love me, I shall die."

"Die! you! My dear Calyste, you are childish," said Camille. "You would not have died for me, then?"

"You made yourself my friend," he replied.

After the little chat that always accompanies the coffee, Vignon begged Conti to sing. Mademoiselle des Touches sat down to the piano. Camille and Gennaro sang *Dunque il mio bene tu mia sarai,* the final duet in Zingarelli's *Romeo e Giulietta,* one of the most pathetic pages of modern music. The passage *Di tanti palpiti* expresses love in all its passion. Calyste, sitting in the armchair where he had sat when Félicité had told him the story of the Marquise, listened devoutly. Béatrix and Vignon stood on each side of the piano.

Conti's exquisite voice blended perfectly with Félicité's. They both had frequently sung the piece; they knew all its

resources, and agreed wonderfully in bringing them out. It was in their hands what the musician had intended to create, a poem of divine melancholy, the swan-song of two lovers. When the duet was ended the hearers were all in a state of feeling that cannot find expression in vulgar applause.

"Oh, Music is the queen of the arts!" exclaimed the Marquise.

"Camille gives the first place to youth and beauty—the queen of all poetry," said Claude Vignon.

Mademoiselle des Touches looked at Claude, dissembling a vague uneasiness. Béatrix, not seeing Calyste, looked round to see what effect the music had had on him, less out of interest in him than for Conti's satisfaction. In a recess she saw a pale face covered with tears. At the sight she hastily turned away, as if some acute pain had stung her, and looked at Gennaro.

It was not merely that Music had risen up before Calyste, had touched him with her divine hand, had launched him on creation and stripped it of its mysteries to his eyes—he was overwhelmed by Conti's genius. In spite of what Camille Maupin had told him of the man's character, he believed at this moment that the singer must have a beautiful soul, a heart full of love. How was he to contend against such an artist? How could a woman ever cease to adore him? The song must pierce her soul like another soul.

The poor boy was as much overcome by poetic feeling as by despair: he saw himself as so small a thing! This ingenuous conviction of his own nothingness was to be read in his face, mingling with his admiration. He did not observe Béatrix, who, attracted to Calyste by the contagion of genuine feeling, pointed him out by a glance to Mademoiselle des Touches.

"Oh! such a delightful nature!" said Félicité. "Conti, you will never receive any applause to compare with the homage paid you by this boy. Let us sing a trio.—Come, Béatrix, my dear."

When the Marquise, Camille, and Conti had returned to the piano, Calyste rose unperceived, flung himself on a sofa in the adjoining bedroom, of which the door was open, and remained there sunk in despair.

PART II

THE DRAMA

"What is the matter with you, my boy?" said Claude Vignon, stealing quietly in after him and taking his hand. "You are in love, you believe yourself scorned; but it is not so. In a few days the field will be open to you, you will be supreme here, and be loved by more than one woman; in fact, if you know how to manage matters, you will be a Sultan here."

"What are you saying?" cried Calyste, starting to his feet and dragging Claude away into the library. "Who that is here loves me?"

"Camille," said Vignon.

"Camille loves me?" said Calyste. "And what of you?"

"I," said Claude, "I——"

He paused. Then he sat down and rested his head against a pillow, in the deepest melancholy.

"I am weary of life," he went on, after a short silence, "and I have not the courage to end it. I wish I were mistaken in what I have told you; but within the last few days more than one vivid gleam has flashed upon me. I did not wander about the rocks of le Croisic for my amusement, on my soul! The bitterness of my tone when, on my return, I found you talking to Camille, had its source in the depths of my wounded self-respect. I will have an explanation presently with Camille. Two minds so clear-sighted as hers and mine cannot deceive each other. Between two professional duelists a fight is soon ended. So I may at once announce my departure. Yes, I shall leave les Touches, to-morrow perhaps, with Conti.

"When we are no longer here, some strange—perhaps terrible—things will certainly happen, and I shall be sorry not

to look on at these struggles of passion, so rare in France, and so dramatic!—You are very young to enter on so perilous a fight; I am interested in you. But for the deep disgust I feel for women, I would stay to help you to play the game; it is difficult; you may lose it; you have two remarkable women to deal with, and you are already too much in love with one to make use of the other.

"Béatrix must surely have some tenacity in her nature, and Camille has magnanimity. You, perhaps, like some fragile and brittle thing, will be dashed between the two rocks, swept away by the torrent of passion. Take care."

Calyste's amazement on hearing these words allowed Claude Vignon to finish his speech and leave the lad, who remained in the position of a traveler in the Alps to whom his guide has proved the depth of an abyss by dropping a stone in.

He had heard from Claude himself that Camille loved him Calyste, at the moment when he knew that his love for Béatrix would end only with his life. There was something in the situation too much for such a guileless young soul. Crushed by immense regret that weighed upon him for the past, killed by the perplexities of the present, between Béatrix, whom he loved, and Camille, whom he no longer loved, when Claude said that she loved him, the poor youth was desperate; he sat undecided, lost in thought. He vainly sought to guess the reasons for which Félicité had rejected his devotion, to go to Paris and accept that of Claude Vignon.

Now and again Madame de Rochefide's voice came to his ear, pure and clear, reviving the violent excitement from which he had fled in leaving the drawing-room. Several times he could hardly master himself so far as to restrain a fierce desire to seize her and snatch her away.—What would become of him? Could he ever come again to les Touches? Knowing that Camille loved him, how could he here worship Béatrix?—He could find no issue from his difficulties.

Gradually silence fell on the house. Without heeding it, he heard the shutting of doors. Then suddenly he counted the twelve strokes of midnight told by the clock in the next room,

where the voices of Camille and Claude now roused him from the numbing contemplation of the future. A light shone there amid the darkness. Before he could show himself, he heard these dreadful words spoken by Vignon.

"You came back from Paris madly in love with Calyste," he was saying to Félicité. "But you were appalled at the consequences of such a passion at your age; it would lead you into a gulf, a hell—to suicide perhaps. Love can exist only in the belief that it is eternal, and you could foresee, a few paces before you in life, a terrible parting—weariness and old age putting a dreadful end to a beautiful poem. You remember *Adolphe,* the disastrous termination of the loves of Madame de Staël and Benjamin Constant, who were, nevertheless, much better matched in age than you and Calyste.

"So, then, you took me, as men take fascines, to raise an intrenchment between yourself and the enemy. But while you tried to attach me to les Touches, was it not that you might spend your days in secret worship of your divinity? But to carry out such a scheme, at once unworthy and sublime, you should have chosen a common man, or a man so absorbed by lofty thought that he would be easily deceived. You fancied that I was simple, and as easy to cheat as a man of genius. I am, it would seem, no more than a clever man: I saw through you. When yesterday I sang the praises of women of your age, and explained to you why Calyste loved you, do you suppose that I thought all your ecstatic looks—brilliant, enchanting—were meant for me? Had I not already read your soul? The eyes, indeed, were fixed on mine, but the heart throbbed for Calyste.—You have never been loved, my poor Maupin; and you never will be now, after denying yourself the beautiful fruit which chance put in your way at the very gates of woman's hell, which must close at the touch of the figure 50."

"And why has love always avoided me?" she asked, in a broken voice. "You who know everything, tell me."

"Why, you are unamiable," said he; "you will not yield to love, you want it to yield to you. You can perhaps be led into

the mischief and spirit of a school-boy; but you have no youth of heart, your mind it too deep, you never were artless and you cannot begin now. Your charm lies in mystery; it is abstract, and not practical. And, again, your power repels very powerful natures; the dread a conflict. Your strength may attract young souls, which, like Calyste's, love to feel protected; but, in the long run, it is fatiguing. You are superior, sublime! You must accept the disadvantages of these two qualities; they are wearisome."

"What a verdict!" cried Camille. "Can I never be a woman? Am I a monster?"

"Possibly," said Claude.

"We shall see," cried the woman, stung to the quick.

"Good-night, my dear. I leave to-morrow.—I owe you no grudge, Camille; I think you the greatest of women; but if I should consent to play the part any longer of a screen or a curtain," said Claude, with too marked inflections of his voice, "you would despise me utterly. We can part now without grief or remorse; we have no happiness to mourn for, no hopes to disappoint.

"To you, as to some infinitely rare men of genius, love is not what Nature made it—a vehement necessity, with acute but transient delights attached to its satisfaction, and then death; you regard it as what Christianity has made it: an ideal realm full of noble sentiments, of immense small things, of poetry and spiritual sensations, of sacrifices, flowers of morality, enchanting harmonies, placed far above all vulgar grossness, but whither two beings joined to be one angel are carried up on the wings of pleasure. This was what I hoped for; I thought I held one of the keys which open the door that is shut to so many persons, and through which we soar into infinitude. You were there already! And so I was deceived.

"I am going back to misery in my vast prison, Paris. Such a deception at the beginning of my career would have been enough to make me flee from woman; now, it fills my soul with such disenchantment as casts me for ever into appalling solitude; I shall be destitute even of the faith which helped

the Holy Fathers to people it with sacred visions.—This, my dear Camille, is what a superior nature brings us to. We may each of us sing the terrible chant that a poet has put into the mouth of Moses addressing the Almighty:

O Lord! Thou hast made me powerful and alone!

At this moment Calyste came in.

"I ought to let you know that I am here," said he.

Mademoiselle des Touches looked absolutely terrified; a sudden color flushed her calm features with a fiery red. All through the scene she was handsomer than she had ever been in her life.

"We thought you had gone, Calyste," said Claude; "but this involuntary indiscretion on both sides will have done no harm; perhaps you will feel more free at les Touches now that you know Félicité so completely. Her silence shows me that I was not mistaken as to the part she intended that I should play. She loves you, as I told you; but she loves you for yourself, and not for herself—a feeling which few women are fitted to conceive of or to cling to: very few of them know the delights of pain kept alive by desire. It is one of the grander passions reserved for men;—but she is somewhat of a man," he added, with a smile. "Your passion for Béatrix will torture her and make her happy, both at once."

Tears rose to Mademoiselle des Touches' eyes; she dared not look either at the merciless Claude or the ingenuous Calyste. She was frightened at having been understood; she had not supposed that any man, whatever his gifts, could divine such a torment of refined feeling, such lofty heroism as hers. And Calyste, seeing her so humiliated at finding her magnanimity betrayed, sympathized with the agitation of the woman he had placed so high, and whom he beheld so stricken. By an irresistible impulse, he fell at Camille's feet and kissed her hands, hiding his tear-washed face in them.

"Claude!" she cried, "do not desert me; what will become of me?"

"What have you to fear?" replied the critic. "Calyste already loves the Marquise like a madman. You can certainly have no stronger barrier between him and yourself than this passion fanned into life by your own act. It is quite as effectual as I could be. Yesterday there was danger for you and for him; but to-day everything will give you maternal joys," and he gave her a mocking glance. "You will be proud of his triumphs."

Félicité looked at Calyste, who, at these words, raised his head with a hasty movement. Claude Vignon was sufficiently revenged by the pleasure he took in seeing their confusion.

"You pushed him towards Madame de Rochefide," Vignon went on; "he is now under the spell. You have dug your own grave. If you had but trusted yourself to me, you would have avoided the disasters that await you."

"Disasters!" cried Camille Maupin, raising Calyste's head to the level of her own, kissing his hair, and wetting it with her tears. "No, Calyste. Forget all you have just heard, and count me for nothing!"

She stood up in front of the two men, drawn to her full height, quelling them by the lightnings that flashed from her eyes in which all her soul shone.

"While Claude was speaking," she went on, "I saw all the beauty, the dignity of hopeless love; is it not the only sentiment that brings us near to God?—Do not love me, Calyste; but I—I will love you as no other woman can ever love!"

It was the wildest cry that ever a wounded eagle sent out from his eyrie. Claude, on one knee, took her hand and kissed it.

"Now go, my dear boy," said Mademoiselle des Touches to Calyste; "your mother may be uneasy."

Calyste returned to Guérande at a leisurely pace, turning round to see the light which shone from the windows of Béatrix's rooms. He was himself surprised that he felt so little pity for Camille; he was almost annoyed with her for having deprived him of fifteen months of happiness. And again, now

and then, he felt the same thrill in himself that Camille had just caused him, he felt the tears she had shed on his hair, he suffered in her suffering, he fancied he could hear the moans —for, no doubt, she was moaning—of this wonderful woman for whom he had so longed a few days since.

As he opened the courtyard gate at home, where all was silent, he saw through the window his mother working by the primitive lamp while waiting for him. Tears rose to his eyes at the sight.

"What more has happened?" asked Fanny, her face expressive of terrible anxiety. Calyste's only reply was to clasp his mother in his arms and kiss her cheeks, her forehead, her hair, with the passionate effusion which delights a mother, infusing into her the subtle fires of the life she gave.

"It is you that I love!" said Calyste to his mother, blushing, and almost shamefaced; "you who live for me alone, whom I would fain make happy."

"But you are not in your usual frame of mind, my child," said the Baroness, looking at her son. "What has happened?"

"Camille loves me," said he; "and I no longer love her."

The Baroness drew him towards her and kissed him on the forehead, and in the deep silence of the gloomy old tapestried room he could hear the rapid beating of his mother's heart. The Irishwoman was jealous of Camille, and had suspected the truth. While awaiting her son night after night she had studied that woman's passion; led by the light of persistent meditation, she had entered into Camille's heart; and without being able to account for it, she had understood that in that unwedded soul there was a sort of motherly affection. Calyste's story horrified this simple and guileless mother.

"Well," said she, after a pause, "love Madame de Rochefide; she will cause me no sorrow."

Béatrix was not free; she could not upset any of the plans they had made for Calyste's happiness, at least so Fanny thought; she saw in her a sort of daughter-in-law to love, and not a rival mother to contend with.

"But Béatrix will never love me!" cried Calyste.

"Perhaps," replied the Baroness, with a knowing air. "Did you not say that she is to be alone to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"Well, my child," said the mother, coloring, "jealousy lurks in all our hearts, but I did not know that I should ever find it at the bottom of my own, for I did not think that any one would try to rob me of my Calyste's affection!" She sighed. "I fancied," she went on, "that marriage would be to you what it was to me. What lights you have thrown on my mind during these two months! What colors are reflected on your very natural passion, my poor darling!—Well, still seem to love your Mademoiselle des Touches; the Marquise will be jealous of her, and will be yours."

"Oh, my sweet mother, Camille would never have told me that!" cried Calyste, taking his mother by the waist, and kissing her in the neck.

"You make me very wicked, you bad child," said she, quite happy at seeing the beaming face hope gave to her son, who gaily went up the winding stairs.

Next morning Calyste desired Gasselin to stand on the road from Guérande to Saint-Nazaire, and watch for Mademoiselle des Touches' carriage; then, as it went past, he was to count the persons in it.

Gasselin returned just as the family had sat down together at breakfast.

"What can have happened?" said Mademoiselle du Guénic; "Gasselin is running as if Guérande were burning."

"He must have caught the rat," said Mariotte, who was bringing in the coffee, milk, and toast.

"He is coming from the town and not from the garden," replied the blind woman.

"But the rat's hole is behind the wall to the front by the street," said Mariotte.

"Monsieur le Chevalier, there were five of them; four inside and the coachman."

"Two ladies on the back seat?" asked Calyste.

"And two gentlemen in front," replied Gasselin.

"Saddle my father's horse, ride after them; be at Saint-Nazaire by the time the boat starts for Paimbœuf; and if the two men go on board, come back and tell me as fast as you can gallop."

Gasselin went.

"Why, nephew, you have the very devil in you!" exclaimed old aunt Zéphirine.

"Let him please himself, sister," cried the Baron. "He was as gloomy as an owl, and now he is as merry as a lark."

"Perhaps you told him that our dear Charlotte was coming," said the old lady, turning to her sister-in-law.

"No," replied the Baroness.

"I thought he might wish to go to meet her," said Mademoiselle du Guénic slily.

"If Charlotte is to stay three months with her aunt, he has time enough to see her in," replied the Baroness.

"Why, sister, what has occurred since yesterday," asked the old lady. "You were so delighted to think that Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël was going this morning to fetch her niece."

"Jacquelin wants me to marry Charlotte to snatch me from perdition, aunt," said Calyste, laughing, and giving his mother a look of intelligence. "I was on the Mall this morning when Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël was talking to Monsieur du Halga; she did not reflect that it would be far worse perdition for me to be married at my age."

"It is written above," cried the old aunt, interrupting Calyste, "that I am to die neither happy nor at peace. I should have liked to see our family continued, and some of our lands redeemed—but nothing of the kind! Can you, my fine nephew, put anything in the scale to outweigh such duties as these?"

"Why," said the Baron, "can Mademoiselle des Touches hinder Calyste from marrying in due course? I must go to see her."

"I can assure you, father, that Félicité will never be an obstacle in the way of my marriage."

"I cannot make head or tail of it!" said the blind woman, who knew nothing of her nephew's sudden passion for the Marquise de Rochefide.

The mother kept her son's secret; in such matters silence is instinctive in all women. The old aunt sank into deep meditation, listening with all her might, spying every voice, every sound, to guess the mystery they were keeping from her.

Gasselin soon returned, and told his young master that he had not needed to go so far as Saint-Nazaire to learn that Mademoiselle des Touches and the lady would return alone; he had heard it in the town, from Bernus, the carrier, who had taken charge of the gentlemen's baggage.

"They will come back alone?" said Calyste. "Bring out my horse."

Gasselin supposed from his young master's voice that there was something serious on hand; he saddled both the horses, loaded the pistols without saying anything, and dressed to ride out with Calyste. Calyste was so delighted to know that Claude and Gennaro were gone, that he never thought of the party he would meet at Saint-Nazaire; he thought only of the pleasure of escorting the Marquise. He took his old father's hands and pressed them affectionately, he kissed his mother, and put his arm round his old aunt's waist.

"Well, at any rate, I like him better thus than when he is sad," said old Zéphirine.

"Where are you off to, Chevalier?" asked his father.

"To Saint-Nazaire."

"The deuce you are! And when is the wedding to be?" said the Baron, who thought he was in a hurry to see Charlotte de Kergarouët. "I should like to be a grandfather; it is high time."

When Gasselin showed his evident intention of riding out with Calyste, it occurred to the young man that he might return in Camille's carriage with Béatrix, leaving his horse in Gasselin's care, and he clapped the man on the shoulder, saying:

"That was well thought of."

"So I should think," replied Gasselin.

"Spare the horses, my boy," said his father, coming out on the steps with Fanny; "they have twelve leagues before them."

Calyste exchanged looks full of meaning with his mother, and was gone.

"Dearest treasure!" said she, seeing him bend his head under the top of the gate.

"God preserve him!" replied the Baron, "for we shall never make another."

This little speech, in the rather coarse taste of a country gentleman, made the Baroness shiver.

"My nephew is not so much in love with Charlotte as to rush to meet her," said old Mademoiselle to Mariotte, who was clearing the table.

"Oh, a fine lady has come to les Touches, a Marquise, and he is running after her. Well, well, he is young!" said Mariotte.

"Those women will be the death of him," said Mademoiselle du Guénic.

"That won't kill him, mademoiselle, quite the contrary," replied Mariotte, who seemed quite happy in Calyste's happiness.

Calyste was riding at a pace that might have killed his horse, when Gasselin very happily asked his master whether he wished to arrive before the departure of the boat; this was by no means his purpose; he had no wish to be seen by either Conti or Vignon. The young man reined in his horse and looked complacently at the double furrow traced by the wheels of the carriage on the sandy parts of the road. He was wildly gay merely at the thought: "She passed this way; she will come back this way; her eyes rested on those woods, on these trees!"

"What a pretty road!" said he to Gasselin.

"Yes, sir, Brittany is the finest country in the world," replied the servant. "Are there such flowers in the hedges, or green lanes that wind like this one, anywhere else to be found?"

"Nowhere, Gasselin."

"Here comes Bernus' carriage," said Gasselin.

"Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël will be in it with her niece; let us hide," said Calyste.

"Hide here, sir! are you crazy? We are in the midst of the sands."

The carriage, which was in fact crawling up a sandy hill above Saint-Nazaire, presently appeared, in all the artless simplicity of rude Breton construction. To Calyste's great astonishment the conveyance was full.

"We have left Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël and her sister and her niece in a great pother," said the driver to Gasselin; "all the places had been taken by the custom-house."

"I am done for!" cried Calyste. The vehicle was in fact full of custom-house men on their way, no doubt, to relieve those in charge at the salt-marshes.

When Calyste reached the little esplanade surrounding the Church of Saint-Nazaire, whence there is a view of Paimbœuf and of the majestic estuary of the Loire where it struggles with the tide, he found Camille and the Marquise waiving their handkerchiefs to bid a last farewell to the two passengers borne away by the steam packet. Béatrix was quite bewitching, her face tenderly shaded by the reflection from a rice-straw hat on which poppies were lightly piled, tied by a scarlet ribbon; in a flowered muslin dress, one little, slender foot put forward in a green gaitered shoe, leaning on her slight parasol-stick, and waving her well-gloved hand. Nothing is more strikingly effective than a woman on a rock, like a statue on its pedestal.

Conti could see Calyste go up to Camille.

"I thought," said the youth to Mademoiselle des Touches, "that you two ladies would be returning alone."

"That was very nice of you, Calyste," she replied, taking his hand. Béatrix looked round, glanced at her young adorer, and gave him the most imperious flash at her command. A smile that the Marquise caught on Camille's eloquent lips made her feel the vulgarity of this impulse, worthy

of a mere *bourgeoise.* Madame de Rochefide then said with a smile to Calyste:

"And was it not rather impertinent to suppose that I could bore Camille on the way?"

"My dear, one man for two widows is not much in the way," said Mademoiselle des Touches, taking Calyste's arm, and leaving Béatrix to gaze after the boat.

At this instant Calyste heard in the street of what must be called the port of Saint-Nazaire the voices of Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, Charlotte, and Gasselin, all three chattering like magpies. The old maid was catechising Gasselin, and wanted to know what had brought him and his master to Saint-Nazaire; Mademoiselle des Touches' carriage had made a commotion.

Before the lad could escape, Charlotte had caught sight of him.

"There is Calyste!" cried the girl.

"Go and offer them my carriage; their woman can sit by my coachman," said Camille, who knew that Madame de Kergarouët, with her daughter and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, had failed to get places.

Calyste, who could not avoid obeying Camille, went to deliver this message. As soon as she knew that she would have to ride with the Marquise de Rochefide and the famous Camille Maupin, Madame de Kergarouët ignored her elder sister's objections; Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël refused to avail herself of what she called the devil's chariot. At Nantes, people lived in rather more civilized latitudes than at Guérande; Camille was admired; she was regarded as the Muse of Brittany and an honor to the country; she excited as much curiosity as jealousy. The absolution granted her in Paris by the fashionable world was consecrated by Mademoiselle des Touches' fine fortune, and perhaps by her former successes at Nantes, which was proud of having been the birthplace of Camille Maupin.

So the Viscountess, crazy with curiosity, dragged away her old sister, turning a deaf ear to her jeremiads.

"Good-morning, Calyste," said little Charlotte.

"Good-morning, Charlotte," replied Calyste, but he did not offer her his arm.

Both speechless with surprise, she at his coldness, he at his own cruelty, they went up the hollow, ravine that is called a street at Saint-Nazaire, following the two sisters in silence. In an instant the girl of sixteen saw the castle in the air which her romantic hopes had built and furnished crumble into ruins. She and Calyste had so constantly played together during their childhood, they had been so intimately connected, that she imagined her future life secure. She had hurried on, carried away by heedless happiness, like a bird rushing down on a field of wheat; she was checked in her flight without being able to imagine what the obstacle could be.

"What is the matter, Calyste?" she asked, taking his hand.

"Nothing," he replied, withdrawing his hand with terrible haste as he thought of his aunt's schemes and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël's.

Tears filled Charlotte's eyes. She looked at the handsome youth without animosity; but she was to feel the first pangs of jealousy and know the dreadful rage of rivalry at the sight of the two Parisian beauties, which led her to suspect the cause of Calyste's coldness.

Charlotte de Kergarouët was of middle height; she had rustic, rosy cheeks, a round face with wide-awake black eyes that affected intelligence, a quantity of brown hair, a round waist, flat back, and thin arms, and the crisp, decided tone of speech adopted by country-bred girls who do not wish to seem simpletons. She was the spoilt child of the family in consequence of her aunt's preference for her. At this moment she was wearing the plaid tweed cloak lined with green silk that she had put on for the passage in the steamboat. Her traveling gown of cheap stuff, with a chaste gathered body and a finely pleated collar, would presently strike her as being hideous in comparison with the fresh morning dress worn by Béatrix and Camille. She would be painfully con-

scious of stockings soiled on the rocks and the boats she had jumped into, of old leather shoes, chosen especially that there might be nothing good to spoil on the journey, as is the manner and custom of provincial folk.

As to the Vicomtesse de Kergarouët, she was typically provincial. Tall, lean, faded, full of covert pretentiousness which only showed when it was wounded, a great talker, and by dint of talk picking up a few ideas as a billiard-player makes a cannon, which gave her a reputation for brilliancy; trying to snub Parisians by a display of blunt country shrewdness, and an assumption of perfect contentment constantly paraded; stooping in the hope of being picked up and furious at being left on her knees; fishing for compliments, as the English have it, and not always catching them; dressing in a style at once exaggerated and slatternly; fancying that a lack of politeness was lofty impertinence, and that she could distress people greatly by paying them no attention; refusing things she wished for to have them offered a second time and pressed on her beyond reason; her head full of extinct subjects, and much astonished to find herself behind the times; finally, hardly able to abstain for one hour from dragging in Nantes, and the small lions of Nantes, and the gossip of the upper ten of Nantes; complaining of Nantes and criticising Nantes, and then regarding as a personal affront the concurrence extorted from the politeness of those who rashly agreed with all she said.

Her manners, her speech, and her ideas had to some extent rubbed off on her four daughters.

To meet Camille Maupin and Madame de Rochefide! Here was fame for the future, and matter for a hundred conversations! She marched on the church as if to take it by storm, flourishing her handkerchief, which she unfolded to show the corners ponderously embroidered at home, and trimmed with worn-out lace. She had a rather stalwart gait, which did not matter in a woman of seven-and-forty.

"Monsieur le Chevalier," said she, and she pointed to Calyste, who was following sulkily enough with Charlotte, "has

informed us of your amiable offer; but my sister, my daughter, and I fear we shall incommode you."

"Not I, sister; I shall not inconvenience these ladies," said the old maid sharply. "I can surely find a horse in Saint-Nazaire to carry me home."

Camille and Béatrix exchanged sidelong looks which Calyste noted, and that glance was enough to annihilate every memory of his youth, all his belief in the Kergarouët-Pen-Hoëls, and to wreck for ever the schemes laid by the two families.

"Five can sit quite easily in the carriage," replied Mademoiselle des Touches, on whom Jacqueline had turned her back. "Even if we were horribly squeezed, which is impossible, as you are all so slight, I should be amply compensated by the pleasure of doing a service to friends of Calyste's. Your maid, madame, will find a seat; and your bundles, if you have any, can be put in the rumble; I have no servant with me."

The Viscountess was profusely grateful, and blamed her sister Jacqueline, who had been in such a hurry for her niece that she would not give her time to travel by land in their carriage; to be sure, the post road was not only longer, but expensive; she must return immediately to Nantes, where she had left three more little kittens eager to have her back again—and she stroked her daughter's chin. But Charlotte put on a little victimized air as she looked up at her mother, which made it seem likely that the Viscountess bored her four daughters most consumedly by trotting them out as persistently as, in *Tristram Shandy*, Corporal Trim puts his cap on.

"You are a happy mother, and you must——" Camille began; but she broke off, remembering that Béatrix must have deserted her boy to follow Conti.

"Oh!" said the Viscountess, "though it is my misfortune to spend my life in the country and at Nantes, I have the comfort of knowing that my children adore me. Have you any children?" she asked Camille.

"I am Mademoiselle des Touches," replied Camille. "Madame is the Marquise de Rochefide."

"Then you are to be pitied for not knowing the greatest happiness we poor mere women can have. Is it not so, madame?" said she to the Marquise, to remedy her bunder. "But you have many compensations."

A hot tear welled up in Béatrix's eyes; she turned hastily away and went to the clumsy parapet at the edge of the rock, whither Calyste followed her.

"Madame," said Camille in a low voice to Madame de Kergarouët, "do you not know that the Marquise is separated from her husband, that she has not seen her son for two years, and does not know when they may meet again?"

"Dear!" cried Madame de Kergarouët. "Poor lady! Is it a judicial separation?"

"No, incompatability," said Camille.

"I can quite understand that," replied the Viscountess, undaunted.

Old Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël had entrenched herself a few yards off with her dear Charlotte. Calyste, after assuring himself that no one could see them, took the Marquise's hand and kissed it, leaving a tear on it. Béatrix turned on him, her eyes dried by anger; some cruel word was on her tongue, but she could say nothing as she saw the tears on the beautiful face of the angelic youth, as deeply moved as she was.

"Good heavens, Calyste!" said Camille, in a whisper, as he rejoined them with Madame de Rochefide, "you will have *that* for a mother-in-law, and that little gaby for your wife."

"Because her aunt is rich," added Calyste, sarcastically.

The whole party now moved towards the inn, and the Viscountess thought it incumbent on her to make some satirical remarks to Camille on the savages of Saint-Nazaire.

"I love Brittany, madame," replied Félicité, gravely. "I was born at Guérande."

Calyste could not help admiring Mademoiselle des Touches, who, by the tones of her voice, her steady gaze, and placid

manners, put him at his ease, notwithstanding the terrible confessions of the scene that had taken place last night. Still, she looked tired; her features betrayed that she had not slept; they looked thickened, but the forehead suppressed the internal storm with relentless calm.

"What queens!" said he to Charlotte, pointing to Béatrix and Camille, as he gave the girl his arm, to Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël's great satisfaction.

"What notion was this of your mother's," said the old lady, also giving a lean arm to her niece, "to throw us into the company of this wretched woman?"

"Oh, aunt! a woman who is the glory of Brittany."

"The disgrace, child!—Do not let me see you too cringing to her."

"Mademoiselle, Charlotte is right," said Calyste; "you are unjust."

"Oh, she has bewitched you!" retorted Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël.

"I have the same friendship for her that I have for you," said Calyste.

"How long have the du Guénics taken to lying?" said the old woman.

"Since the Pen-Hoëls took to being deaf," retorted Calyste.

"Then you are not in love with her?" asked the aunt, delighted.

"I was, but I am no longer," he replied.

"Bad boy! Then why have you given us so much anxiety? I knew that love was but a folly; only marriage is to be relied on," said she, looking at Charlotte.

Charlotte, somewhat reassured, hoped to reconquer her advantages by an appeal to the memories of their childhood, and clung to Calyste's arm; but he vowed to himself that he would come to a clear understanding with the little heiress.

"Oh, what famous games of *mouche* we will have, Calyste," said she, "and what capital fun!"

The horses were put in; Camille made the Viscountess and Charlotte take the best seats, for Jacqueline had disap-

peared; then she and the Marquise sat with their backs to the horses. Calyste, forced to give up the pleasure he had promised himself, rode at the side of the carriage; and the horses, all tired, went slowly enough to allow of his gazing at Béatrix.

History has kept no record of the singular conversation of these four persons, so strangely thrown together by chance in this carriage; for it is impossible to accept the hundred and something versions which were current at Nantes as to the stories, the repartees, and the witticisms which Madame de Kergarouët heard from Camille Maupin *himself*. She took good care not to repeat, nor even understand, the replies made by Mademoiselle des Touches to all her ridiculous inquiries—such as writers so often hear, and by which they are made to pay dearly for their few joys.

"How do you write your books?" asked Madame de Kergarouët.

"Why, just as you do your needlework," said Camille, "your netting, or cross-stitch."

"And where did you find all those deep observations and attractive pictures?"

"Where you find all the clever things you say, madame.—Nothing is easier than writing, and if you chose——"

"Ah, it all lies in the choosing? I should never have thought it!—And which of your works do you yourself prefer?"

"It is difficult to have any preference for these little kittens."

"You are surfeited with compliments; it is impossible to say anything new."

"Believe me, madame, I appreciate the form you give to yours."

The Viscountess, anxious not to seem neglectful of the Marquise, said, looking archly at her:

"I shall never forget this drive, sitting between wit and beauty."

The Marquise laughed.

"You flatter me, madame," said she. "It is not in nature that wit should be noticed in the company of genius, and I have not yet said much."

Charlotte, keenly alive to her mother's absurdity, looked at her, hoping to check her; but the Viscountess still valiantly showed fight against the two laughing Parisian ladies. Calyste, trotting at an easy pace by the carriage, could only see the two women on the back seat, and his eyes fell on them alternately, betraying a very melancholy mood. Béatrix, who could not help being seen, persistently avoided looking at the youth; with a placidity that is maddening to a lover, she sat with her hands folded over her crossed shawl, and seemed lost in deep meditation.

At a spot where the road is shaded and as moist and green as a cool forest path, where the wheels of the carriage were scarcely audible, and the wind brought a resinous scent, Camille remarked on the beauty of the place, and, leaning her hand on Béatrix's knee, she pointed to Calyste and said:

"How well he rides!"

"Calyste?" said Madame de Kergarouët. "He is a capital horseman."

"Oh, Calyste is so nice!" said Charlotte.

"There are so many Englishmen just like him——" replied the Marquise, indifferently, without finishing her sentence.

"His mother is Irish—an O'Brien," said Charlotte, feeling personally attacked.

Camille and the Marquise drove into Guérande with the Viscomtesse de Kergarouët and her daughter, to the great astonishment of the gaping townspeople; they left their traveling companions at the corner of the little Rue du Guénic, where there was something very like a crowd. Calyste had ridden on to announce to his mother the arrival of the party, who were expected to dinner. The meal had been politely put off till four o'clock.

The Chevalier went back to give the ladies his arm; he kissed Camille's hand, hoping to touch that of the Marquise, but she firmly kept her arms folded, and he besought her in vain with eyes sparkling through wasted tears.

"You little goose!" said Camille in his ear, with a light, friendly kiss on it.

"True enough!" said Calyste to himself as the carriage turned. "I forget my mother's counsels—but I believe I always shall forget them."

Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, who arrived valiantly mounted on a hired nag, Madame de Kergarouët, and Charlotte found the table laid, and were cordially, if not luxuriously, received by the du Guénics. Old Zéphirine had sent for certain bottles of fine wine from the depths of the cellar, and Mariotte had surpassed herself in Breton dishes. The Viscountess, delighted to have traveled with the famous Camille Maupin, tried to expatiate on modern literature, and the place held in it by Camille; but as it had been with the game of whist, so it was with literary matters; neither the du Guénics, nor the Curé, who looked in, nor the Chevalier du Halga, understood anything about them. The Abbé and the old naval officer sipped the liqueurs at dessert.

As soon as Mariotte, helped by Gasselin and by Madame de Kergarouët's maid, had cleared the table, there was an enthusiastic clamor for *mouche*. Joy prevailed. Everybody believed Calyste to be free, and saw him married ere long to little Charlotte. Calyste sat silent. For the first time in his life he was making comparisons between the Kergarouëts and the two elegant and clever women, full of taste, who, at this very moment, were probably laughing at the two provincials, if he might judge from the first glances they had exchanged. Fanny, knowing Calyste's secret, noticed his dejection. Charlotte's coquetting and her mother's attacks had no effect on him. Her dear boy was evidently bored; his body was in this room, where of yore he could have been amused by the absurdities of *mouche*, but his spirit was wandering round les Touches.

"How can I send him off to Camille's?" thought the mother, who loved him and who was bored because he was bored. Her affection lent her inventiveness.

"You are dying to be off to les Touches to see *her?*" she whispered to Calyste.

The boy's answer was a smile and a blush that thrilled this devoted mother to her heart's very core.

"Madame," said she to the Viscountess, "you will be very uncomfortable to-morrow in the carriage chaise, and obliged to start very early in the morning. Would it not be better if you were to have Mademoiselle des Touches' carriage? Go over, Calyste," said she, turning to her son, "and arrange the matter at les Touches; but come back quickly."

"It will not take ten minutes," cried Calyste, giving his mother a wild hug out on the steps, whither she followed him.

Calyste flew with the speed of a fawn, and was in the entrance hall of les Touches just as Camille and Béatrix came out of the dining-room after dinner. He had the wit to offer his arm to Félicité.

"You have deserted the Viscountess and her daughter for us," said she, pressing his arm. "We are able to appreciate the extent of the sacrifice."

"Are these Kergarouëts related to the Portenduères and old Admiral de Kergarouët, whose widow married Charles de Vandenesse?" Madame de Rochefide asked Camille.

"Mademoiselle Charlotte is the Admiral's grandniece," replied Camille.

"She is a charming young person," said Béatrix, seating herself in a Gothic armchair; "the very thing for Monsieur du Guénic."

"That marriage shall never be!" cried Camille, vehemently.

Calyste, overwhelmed by the cold indifference of the Marquise, who spoke of the little country girl as the only creature for whom he was a match, sat speechless and bewildered.

"And why not, Camille?" said Madame de Rochefide.

"My dear," said Camille, seeing Calyste's despair, "I did not advise Conti to get married, and I believe I was delightful to him—you are ungenerous."

Béatrix looked at her with surprise mingled with indefinable suspicions. Calyste almost understood Camille's self-immolation as he saw the pale flush rise in her cheeks, which, in her, betrayed the most violent emotions: he went up to

her awkwardly enough, took her hand, and kissed it. Camille sat down to the piano with an easy air, as if equally sure of her friend and of the lover she had claimed, turning her back upon them, and leaving them to each other. She improvised some variations on airs, unconsciously suggested by her thoughts, for they were all deeply sad. The Marquise appeared to be listening; but she was watching Calyste, who was too young and too guileless to play the part suggested to him by Camille, and sat lost in ecstasy before his real idol. At the end of an hour, during which Mademoiselle des Touches gave herself up to her jealous feelings, Béatrix went to her room.

Camille at once led Calyste into her own room, so as not to be overheard, for women have an admirable sense of distrust.

"My child," said she, "you must pretend to love me or you are lost. You are a perfect child; you know nothing about women, you know only how to love. To love and to be loved are two very different things. You are rushing into terrible suffering. I want you to be happy. If you provoke Béatrix, not in her pride, but in her obstinacy, she is capable of flying off to join Conti at a few leagues from Paris. Then what would become of you?"

"I should love her," replied Calyste.

"You would not see her again."

"Oh, yes, I should," said he.

"Pray how?"

"I should follow her."

"But you are as poor as Job, my dear child!"

"My father, Gasselin, and I lived in la Vendée for three months on a hundred and fifty francs, marching day and night."

"Calyste," said Félicité, "listen to me. I see you are too honest to act a part; I do not wish to corrupt so pure a nature as yours. I will take it all on myself. Béatrix shall love you."

"Is it possible?" he cried, clasping his hands.

"Yes," said Camille. "But we must undo the vows she had made to herself. I will lie for you. Only, do not interfere in any way with the arduous task I am about to undertake. The Marquise has much aristocratic cunning; she is intellectually suspicious; no hunter ever had to take more difficult game; so in this case, my poor boy, the sportsman must take his dog's advice. Will you promise to obey me blindly? I will be your Fox," said she, naming Calyste's best hound.

"What, then, am I to do?" replied the young man.

"Very little," said Camille. "Come here every day at noon. I, like an impatient mistress, shall always be at the window of the corridor that looks out on the Guérande road to see you coming. I shall fly to my room, so as not to be seen—not to let you know the depth of a passion that is a burthen on you; but sometimes you will see me and wave your handkerchief to me. Then in the courtyard, and as you come upstairs, you must put on a look of some annoyance. That will be no dissimulation, my child," said she, leaning her head on his breast, "will it?—Do not hurry up; look out of the staircase window on to the garden to look for Béatrix. When she is there—and she will be there, never fear—if she sees you, come straight, but very slowly, to the little drawing-room, and thence to my room. If you should see me at the window spying your treachery, you must start back that I may not catch you imploring a glance from Béatrix. Once in my room you will be my prisoner.—Yes; we will sit there till four o'clock. You may spend the time in reading; I will smoke. You will be horribly bored by not seeing her, but I will provide you with interesting books. You have read nothing of George Sand's; I will send a man to-night to buy her works at Nantes, and those of some other writers that are unknown to you.

"I shall be the first to leave the room; you must not put down your book or come into the little drawing-room till you hear Béatrix in there talking to me. Whenever you see a

music-book open on the piano, you can ask if you may stay. You may be positively rude to me if you can; I give you leave; all will be well."

"I know, Camille," said he, with delightful good faith, "that you have the rarest affection for me; it makes me quite sorry that I ever saw Béatrix; but what do you hope for?"

"In a week Béatrix will be crazy about you."

"Good God!" cried he, "is that possible?" and, clasping his hands, he fell on his knees before Camille, who was touched and happy to give him such joy at her own cost.

"Listen to me," said she. "If you speak to the Marquise—not merely in the way of conversation, but if you exchange even a few words with her—if you allow her to question you, if you fail in the wordless part I set you to play, and which is certainly easy enough, understand clearly," and she spoke in a serious tone, "you will lose her for ever."

"I do not understand anything of all this, Camille," cried Calyste, looking at her with adorable guilelessness.

"If you understood, you would not be the exquisite child that you are, the noble, handsome Calyste," said she, taking his hand and kissing it.

And Calyste did what he had never done before; he put his arm round Camille and kissed her gently in the neck, without passion, but tenderly, as he kissed his mother. Mademoiselle des Touches could not restrain a burst of tears.

"Now go, child," said she, "and tell your Viscountess that my carriage is at her orders."

Calyste wanted to stay, but he was obliged to obey Camille's imperious and imperative gesture. He went home in high spirits, for he was sure of being loved within a week by the beautiful Rochefide.

The *mouche* players found in him the Calyste they had lost these two months. Charlotte ascribed the change to her own presence. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël was affectionately teasing. The Abbé Grimont tried to read in the Baroness' eyes the reason for the calm he saw there. The Chevalier du Halga rubbed his hands.

The two old maids were as lively as a couple of lizards. The Viscountess owed five francs worth of accumulated fines. Zéphirine's avarice was so keenly excited that she lamented her inability to see the cards, and was sharply severe on her sister-in-law, who was distracted from the game by Calyste's good spirits, and who asked him a question now and then without understanding his replies.

The game went on till eleven o'clock. Two players had retired; the Baron and du Halga were asleep in their arm-chairs. Mariotte had made some buckwheat cakes; the Baroness brought out her tea-caddy; and before the Kergarouëts left, the noble house of du Guénic offered its guests a collation, with fresh butter, fruit, and cream, for which the silver teapot was brought out, and the English china tea-service sent to the Baroness by one of her aunts. This air of modern splendor in that antique room, the Baroness' exquisite grace, accustomed as a good Irishwoman to make and pour out tea, a great business with Englishwomen, were really delightful. The greatest luxury would not have given such a simple, unpretending, and dignified effect as this impulse of glad hospitality.

When there was no one left in the room but the Baroness and her son, she looked inquiringly at Calyste.

"What happened this evening at les Touches?" she asked.

Calyste told her of the hope Camille had put into his heart and of her strange instructions.

"Poor woman!" exclaimed Fanny, clasping her hands, and for the first time pitying Mademoiselle des Touches.

Some minutes after Calyste had left, Béatrix, who had heard him leave the house, came into her friend's room, and found her sunk on a sofa, her eyes wet with tears.

"What is the matter, Félicité?" asked the Marquise.

"That I am forty and in love, my dear!" said Mademoiselle des Touches, in a tone of terrible fury, her eyes suddenly dry and hard. "If only you could know, Béatrix, how many tears I shed daily over the lost days of my youth! To

be loved out of pity, to know that one's pittance of happiness is earned by painful toil, by catlike tricks, by snares laid for the innocence and virtue of a mere boy—is not that shameful? Happily, we find a sort of absolution in the infinitude of passion, in the energy of happiness, in the certainty of being for ever supreme above other women in a young heart, on which our name is graven by unforgettable pleasure and insane self-sacrifice. Yet, if he asked it of me, I would throw myself into the sea at his least signal. Sometimes I catch myself wishing that he would desire it; it would be a sacrifice, and not suicide.

"Oh! Béatrix, in coming here you set me a cruel task! I know how difficult it is to triumph against you; but you love Conti, you are noble and generous, and you will not deceive me; on the contrary, you will help me to preserve my Calyste. I was prepared for the impression you would make on him, but I have not been so foolish as to seem jealous; that would but add fuel to the fire. On the contrary, I announced your arrival, depicting you in such bright colors that you could never come up to the portrait, and unluckily you are handsomer than ever."

This vehement lament, in which truth and untruth were mingled, completely deceived Madame de Rochefide. Claude Vignon had told Conti his reasons for leaving; Béatrix was, of course, informed, so she showed magnanimity by behaving coldly to Calyste; but at this instant there awoke in her that thrill of joy which every woman feels at the bottom of her heart on hearing that she is loved. The love she inspires in any man implies an unfeigned flattery which it is impossible not to appreciate; but when the man belongs to another woman, his homage gives more than joy, it is heavenly bliss. Béatrix sat down by her friend, and was full of little coaxing ways.

"You have not a white hair," said she; "you have not a wrinkle; your temples are smooth still, while I know many a woman of thirty obliged to cover hers. Look, my dear," she added, raising her curls, "what my journey cost me."

She showed the faintest pucker that ruffled the surface of her exquisite skin; she turned up her sleeve and displayed the same wrinkles on her wrists, where the transparent texture already showed lines, and a network of swollen veins, and three deep marks made a bracelet of furrows.

"Are not these the two spots which can tell no lies, as a writer, investigating our miseries, has said? We must suffer much before we see the truth of his terrible shrewdness; but, happily for us, most men know nothing about it, and do not read that atrocious writer."

"Your letter told me all," replied Camille. "Happiness is not fatuous; you boasted too much of yours. In love, truth is deaf, dumb, and blind. And I, knowing you had reasons for throwing over Conti, dreaded your visit here. My dear, Calyste is an angel; he is as good as he is handsome; the poor innocent will not resist one look from you, he admires you too much not to love on the smallest encouragement; your disdain will preserve him to me. I confess it with the cowardice of true passion: If you take him from me, you kill me. *Adolphe,* that terrible book by Benjamin Constant, has told us of Adolphe's sufferings; but what of the woman's, heh? He did not study them enough to depict them, and what woman would dare reveal them? They would discredit our sex, humiliate our virtues, add to our vices. Ah! if I may measure them by my fears, these tortures are like the torments of hell. But if he deserts me, my determination is fixed."

"And what have you determined?" asked Béatrix, with an eagerness that was a shock to Camille.

On this the two friends looked at each other with the keenness of two Venetian inquisitors of State, a swift glance, in which their souls met and struck fire like two flints. The Marquise's eyes fell.

"Besides man there is only God!" said the famous woman gravely. "God is the unknown. I should cast myself into it as into a gulf. Calyste has just sworn that he admires you only as he might admire a picture; but you are eight-and-twenty, and in all the splendor of your beauty. So the strug-

gle between him and me has begun by a falsehood. Happily I know how to win."

"And how is that?"

"That, my dear, is my secret. Leave me the advantages of my age. Though Claude Vignon has cast me into the abyss—me, when I had raised myself to a spot which I believed to be inaccessible—I may at least pluck the pale blossoms, etiolated but delicious, which grow at the foot of the precipice."

Madame de Rochefide was moulded like wax by Mademoiselle des Touches, who reveled in savage pleasure as she involved her in her meshes. Camille sent her to bed, nettled with curiosity, tossed between jealousy and generosity, but certainly thinking much about the handsome youth.

"She would be delighted if she could betray me," said Camille to herself, as they kissed and said good-night.

Then, when she was alone, the author made way for the woman—she melted into tears; she filled her hookah with tobacco dipped in opium, and spent the greater part of the night smoking, and thus numbing the tortures of her love, while seeing, through the clouds of smoke, Calyste's charming head.

"What a fine book might be written containing the story of my sorrows!" said she to herself; "but it has been done. Sappho lived before me. Sappho was young! A touching and lovely heroine indeed is a woman of forty! Smoke your hookah, my poor Camille, you have not even the privilege of making a poem out of your woes; this crowns them all!"

She did not go to bed till daybreak, mingling tears, spasms of rage, and magnanimous resolutions in the long meditation wherein she sometimes considered the mysteries of the Catholic religion, of which she had never thought in the course of her reckless life as an artist and an unbelieving writer.

Next day, Calyste, advised by his mother to act exactly on Camille's instructions, came at noon and stole mysteriously up to Mademoiselle des Touches' room, where he found plenty of books. Félicité sat in an armchair by the window, smoking, and gazing alternately at the wild marsh landscape, at the sea,

and at Calyste, with whom she exchanged a few words concerning Béatrix. At a certain moment, seeing the Marquise walking in the garden, she went to the window to unfasten the curtains, so that her friend should see her, and drew them to shut out the light, leaving only a strip that fell on Calyste's book.

"I shall ask you to stay to dinner this evening, my child," said she, tumbling his hair, "and you must refuse, looking at Béatrix; you will have no difficulty in making her understand how deeply you regret being unable to remain here."

At about four o'clock Camille left him and went to play the dreadful farce of her false happiness to the Marquise, whom she brought back to the drawing-room. Calyste then came out of the adjoining room; at that moment he felt the shame of his position. The look he gave Béatrix, though watched for by Félicité, was even more expressive than she had expected. Béatrix was beautifully dressed.

"How elegant you are, my sweetheart!" said Camille, when Calyste had left.

These manœuvres went on for six days; they were seconded, without Calyste's knowledge, by the most ingenious conversations between Camille and her friend. There was between the two women a duel without truce, in which the weapons were cunning, feints, generosity, false confessions, astute confidences, in which one hid her love and the other stripped hers bare, while nevertheless the iron sharpness, red hot with Camille's treacherous words, pierced her friend's heart to the core, implanting some of those evil feelings which good women find it so hard to suppress. Béatrix in the end took offence at the suspicions betrayed by Camille; she thought them dishonoring to both alike; she was delighted to discover in the great authoress the weakness of her sex, and longed for the pleasure of showing her where her superiority ended, how she might be humiliated.

"Well, my dear, what are you going to tell him to-day?" she asked, with a spiteful glance at her friend, when the imaginary lover asked leave to remain. "On Monday we had some-

thing to talk over; on Tuesday you had too poor a dinner; on Wednesday you were afraid of annoying the Baroness; on Thursday we were going out together; yesterday you bid him good-bye as soon as he opened his mouth. Now, I want him to stay to-day, poor boy!"

"Already, my dear!" said Camille, with biting irony.

Béatrix colored.

"Then stay, Monsieur du Guénic," said Mademoiselle des Touches, assuming a queenly air, as though she were nettled.

Béatrix turned cold and hard; she was crushing, satirical, and intolerable to Calyste, whom Félicité sent off to play *mouche* with Mademoiselle de Kergarouët.

"That girl is not dangerous!" said Béatrix, smiling.

Young men in love are like starving people, the cook's preparations do not satisfy them; they think too much of the end to understand the means. As he turned from les Touches to Guérande, Calyste's mind was full of Béatrix; he did not know what deep feminine skill Félicité was employing to promote his interests—to use a cant phrase. In the course of this week the Marquise had written but one letter to Conti, a symptom of indifference which had not escaped Camille.

Calyste's whole life was concentrated in the short moments when he saw Béatrix; this drop of water, far from quenching his thirst, only increased it. The magic words, "You shall be loved," spoken by Camille and endorsed by his mother, were the talisman by which he checked the fire of his passion. He tried to kill time; he could not sleep, and cheated his sleeplessness by reading, bringing home a barrow-load of books every evening, as Mariotte expressed it. His aunt cursed Mademoiselle des Touches; but the Baroness, who had often gone up to her son's room on seeing a light there, knew the secret of his wakefulness. Though Fanny had never got beyond her timidity as an ignorant girl, and love's books had remained closed to her, her motherly tenderness guided her to certain notions; still, the abysses of the sentiment were dark to her and hidden by clouds, and she was very much alarmed at the

state in which she saw her son, terrifying herself over the one absorbing and incomprehensive desire that was consuming him.

Calyste had, in fact, but one idea; the image of Béatrix was always before him. During the evening, over the cards, his absence of mind was like his father's slumbers. Finding him so unlike what he had been when he had believed himself in love with Camille, his mother recognized with a sort of terror the symptoms of a genuine passion, a thing altogether unknown in the old family home. Feverish irritability and constant dreaming made Calyste stupid. He would often sit for hours gazing at one figure in the tapestry. That morning she had advised him to go no more to les Touches, but to give up these two women.

"Not go to les Touches!" cried he.

"Nay, go, my dear, go; do not be angry, my darling," replied she, kissing his eyes, which had flashed flame at her.

In this state Calyste was within an ace of losing the fruits of Camille's skilled manœuvres by the Breton impetuosity of his love, which he could no longer master. In spite of his promises to Félicité, he vowed that he would see and speak to Béatrix. He wanted to read her eyes, to drown his gaze in their depths, to study the little details of her dress, to breathe its fragrance, to hear the music of her voice, follow the elegant deliberateness of her movements, embrace her figure in a glance—to contemplate her, in short, as a great general studies the field on which a decisive battle is to be fought. He wanted her, as lovers want; he was the prey of such desire as closed his ears, dulled his intellect, and threw him into a morbid condition, in which he no longer saw obstacles or distance, and was not even conscious of his body.

It struck him that he might go to les Touches before the hour agreed upon, hoping to find Béatrix in the garden. He knew that she walked there while waiting for breakfast. Mademoiselle des Touches and her friend had been in the morning to see the salt-marshes, and the basin with its shore of fine sand, into which the sea oozes, looking like a lake in the

midst of the sand-hills; they had come home, and were talking as they wandered about the yellow gravel paths in the garden.

"If this landscape interests you," said Camille, "you should go to le Croisic with Calyste. There are some very fine rocks there, cascades of granite, little bays with natural basins, wonders of capricious variety, and the seashore with thousands of fragments of marble, a whole world of amusement. You will see women *making wood,* that is to say, plastering masses of cow-dung against the wall to dry, and then piling them to keep, like peat in Paris; then in the winter they warm themselves by that fuel."

"And you will trust Calyste?" said the Marquise, laughing, in a tone which plainly showed that Camille, by sulking with Béatrix the night before, had obliged her to think of Calyste.

"Oh, my dear, when you know the angelic soul of a boy like him you will understand me. In him beauty is as nothing, you must know that pure heart, that guilelessness that is amazed at every step taken in the realm of love. What faith! what candor! what grace! The ancients had good reason to worship Beauty as holy.

"Some traveler, I forget who, tells us that horses in a state of freedom take the handsomest of them to be their leader. Beauty, my dear, is the genius of matter; it is the hall-mark set by Nature on her most perfect creations; it is the truest symbol, as it is the greatest chance. Did any one ever imagine a deformed angel? Do not they combine grace and strength? What has kept us standing for hours together before certain pictures in Italy, in which genius has striven for years to realize one of these caprices of nature? Come, with your hand on your conscience, was it not the ideal of beauty which we combined in our minds with moral grandeur? Well, and Calyste is one of those dreams made real; he has the courage of the lion, who remains quiet without suspecting his sovereignty. When he feels at his ease he is brilliant; I like his girlish diffidence. In his heart, my soul is refreshed after all the corruption, the ideas of science, literature, the world, politics,— all the futile accessories under which we stifle happiness. I

am now what I never was before—I am a child! I am sure of him, but I like to pretend jealousy; it makes him happy. Besides, it is part of my secret."

Béatrix walked on, silent and pensive; Camille was enduring unspoken martyrdom, and flashing side glances at her that looked like flames.

"Ah, my dear, you—you are happy," said Béatrix, leaning her hand on Camille's arm like a woman weary of some covert resistance.

"Yes! very happy!" replied poor Félicité, with savage bitterness.

The women sank on to a bench, both exhausted. No creature of her sex was ever subjected to more elaborate seduction or more clear-sighted Machiavelism than Madame de Rochefide had been during the last week.

"But I—I who see Conti's infidelities, who swallow them, who——"

"And why do you not give him up?" said Camille, discerning a favorable moment for striking a decisive blow.

"Can I?"

"Oh! poor child——"

They both sat stupidly gazing at a clump of trees.

"I will go and hasten breakfast," said Camille, "this walk has given me an appetite."

"Our conversation has taken away mine," said Béatrix.

Béatrix, a white figure in a morning dress, stood out against the green masses of foliage. Calyste, who had stolen into the garden through the drawing-room, turned down a path, walking slowly to meet the Marquise by chance, as it were; and Béatrix could not help starting a little when she saw him.

"How did I displease you yesterday, madame?" asked Calyste, after a few commonplace remarks had been exchanged.

"Why, you neither please me nor displease me," said she gently.

Her tone, her manner, her delightful grace encouraged Calyste.

"I am indifferent to you?" said he, in a voice husky with the tears that rose to his eyes.

"Must we not be indifferent to each other?" replied Béatrix. "Each of us has a sincere attachment——"

"Oh!" said Calyste eagerly, "I did love Camille; but I do not love her now."

"Then what do you do every day, all the morning long?" asked she, with a perfidious smile. "I cannot suppose that, in spite of her passion for tobacco, Camille prefers her cigar to you; or that, in spite of your admiration for authoresses, you spend four hours in reading novels by women."

"Then you know?" said the innocent boy, his face flushed with the joy of gazing at his idol

"Calyste!" cried Camille violently, as she appeared on the scene, seizing him by the arm and pulling him some steps; "Calyste, is this what you promised me?"

The Marquise heard this reproof, while Mademoiselle des Touches went off scolding, and leading away Calyste; she stood mystified by Calyste's avowal, and unable to understand it. Madame de Rochefide was not so clear-sighted as Claude Vignon. The truth of the terrible and sublime comedy performed by Camille is one of those parts of magnanimous infamy which a woman can conceive of only in the last extremity. It means a breaking heart, the end of her feelings as a woman, and the beginning of a sacrifice, which drags her down to hell or leads her to heaven.

During breakfast, to which Calyste was invited, Béatrix, whose feelings were lofty and proud, had already undergone a revulsion, stifling the germs of love that were sprouting in her heart. She was not hard or cold to Calyste, but her mild indifference wrung his heart. Félicité proposed that they should go on the next day but one to make an excursion through the strange tract of country lying between les Touches, le Croisic, and le Bourg de Batz. She begged Calyste to spend the morrow in finding a boat and some men, in case they should wish to go out by sea. She undertook to supply provisions, horses, and everything necessary to spare them any fatigue in this party of pleasure.

Béatrix cut her short by saying that she would not take the risk of running about the country. Calyste's face, which had expressed lively delight, was suddenly clouded.

"Why, what are you afraid of, my dear?" said Camille.

"My position is too delicate to allow of my compromising, not my reputation, but my happiness," she said with meaning, and she looked at the lad. "You know how jealous Conti is; if he knew——"

"And who is to tell him?"

"Will he not come back to fetch me?"

At these words Calyste turned pale. Notwithstanding Félicité's arguments, and those of the young Breton, Madame de Rochefide was inexorable, and showed what Camille called her obstinacy. Calyste, in spite of the hopes Félicité gave him, left les Touches in one of those fits of lovers' distress of which the violence often rises to the pitch of madness.

On his return home, Calyste did not quit his room till dinner-time, and went back again soon after. At ten o'clock his mother became uneasy, and went up to him; she found him writing in the midst of a quantity of torn papers and rough copy. He was writing to Béatrix, for he distrusted Camille; the Marquise's manner during their interview in the garden had encouraged him strangely.

Never did a first love-letter spring in a burning fount from the soul, as might be supposed. In all youths as yet uncorrupted, such a letter is produced with a flow too hotly effervescent not to be the elixir of several letters begun, rejected, and re-written.

Here is that sent by Calyste, which he read to his poor, astonished mother. To her, the old house was on fire; her son's love blazed up in it like the flare of a conflagration.

Calyste to Béatrix.

"MADAME,—I loved you when as yet you were but a dream to me; imagine the fervor assumed by my love when I saw you. The dream was surpassed by the reality. My regret is

that I have nothing to tell you that you do not know, when I say how beautiful you are; still, perhaps your beauty never gave rise to so many feelings in any one as in me. You are beautiful in so many ways; I have studied you so thoroughly by thinking of you day and night, that I have penetrated the mystery of your personality, the secrets of your heart, and your misprised refinements. Have you ever been loved as you deserve?

"Let me tell you, then, that there is nothing in you which has not its interpretation in my heart: your pride answers to mine, the dignity of your looks, the grace of your mien, the elegance of your movements—everything in you is in harmony with the thoughts and wishes hidden in your secret soul; and it is because I can read them that I think myself worthy of you. If I had not become, within these few days, your second self, should I dare speak to you of myself? To read myself would be egotistic; it is you I speak of here, not Calyste.

"To write to you, Béatrix, I have set my twenty years aside; I have stolen a march on myself and aged my mind—or, perhaps, you have aged it by a week of the most horrible torments, caused, innocently indeed, by you. Do not take me for one of those commonplace lovers at whom you laugh with such good reason. What merit is there, indeed, in loving a young, beautiful, clever, noble woman! Alas, I cannot even dream of deserving you! What am I to you? A boy attracted by beauty and moral worth, as an insect is attracted by light. You cannot do anything else than trample on the flowers of my soul, yet all my happiness lies in seeing you spurn them under foot. Absolute devotion, unlimited faith, the maddest passion,—all these treasures of a true and loving heart are nothing; they help me to love, they cannot win love.

"Sometimes I wonder that such fervid fanaticism should fail to warm the idol; and when I meet your severe, cold eye, I feel myself turn to ice. Your disdain affects me then, and not my adoration. Why? You cannot possibly hate me so much as I love you; so ought the weaker feeling to get the mastery over the stronger?

"I loved Félicité with all the strength of my heart; I forgot her in a day, in an instant, on seeing you. She was a mistake, you are the truth. You, without knowing it, have wrecked my happiness, and you owe me nothing in exchange. I loved Camille without hope, and you give me no hopes; nothing is changed but the divinity. I was a Pagan, I am a Christian; that is all. Only, you have taught me to love—to be loved does not come till later. Camille says it is not love that loves only for a few days: the love that does not grow day by day is a contemptible passion; to continue growing, it must not foresee its end, and she could see the setting of our sun.

"On seeing you, I understood these sayings which I had struggled against with all my youth, all the rage of my desires, all the fierce despotism of my twenty years. Then our great and sublime Camille mingled her tears with mine. So I may love you on earth and in heaven, as we love God. If you loved me, you could not meet me with the reasoning by which Camille annihilated my efforts. We are both young, we can fly on the same wings, under the same sky, and never fear the storm that threatened that eagle.

"But what am I saying? I am carried far beyond the modesty of my hopes. You will cease to believe in the submission, the patience, the mute worship which I implore you not to wound needlessly. I know, Béatrix, that you cannot love me without falling in your own esteem. And I ask for no return.

"Camille said once that there was an innate fatality in names, as in her own. I felt this fatality in yours when on the pier at Guérande it struck my eyes on the seashore: you will come into my life as Beatrice came into Dante's. My heart will be the pedestal for a white statue—vindictive, jealous, and tyrannous. You are prohibited from loving me; you would endure a thousand deaths; you would be deceived, mortified, unhappy. There is in you a diabolical pride which binds you to the pillar you have laid hold on; you will perish while shaking the temple like Samson. I did not discover all these things; my love is too blind; Camille told me. Here

it is not my mind that speaks, but hers; I have no wits when you are in question, a tide of blood comes up from my heart, darkening my intellect with its waves, depriving me of my powers, paralyzing my tongue, making my knees quake and bend. I can only adore you, whatever you do. Camille calls your firmness obstinacy; I defend you; I believe it to be dictated by virtue. You are only all the more beautiful in my eyes. I know my fate; the pride of Brittany is a match for the woman who has made a virtue of hers.

"And so, dear Béatrix, be kind and comforting to me. When the victims were chosen, they were crowned with flowers; you owe me the garlands of compassion, and music for the sacrifice. Am I not the proof of your greatness, and will you not rise to the height of my love, scorned in spite of its sincerity, in spite of its undying fires?

"Ask Camille what my conduct has been since the day when she told me that she loved Claude Vignon. I was mute; I suffered in silence. Well, then, for you I could find yet greater strength, if you do not drive me to desperation, if you understand my heroism. One word of praise from you would enable me to bear the torments of martyrdom. If you persist in this cold silence, this deadly disdain, you will make me believe that I am to be feared. Oh, be to me all you can be—charming, gay, witty, affectionate. Talk to me of Gennaro as Camille did of Claude. I have no genius but that of love; there is nothing formidable in me, and in your presence I will behave as though I did not love you.

"Can you reject the prayer of such humble devotion, of a hapless youth who only asks that his sun should give him light and warm him? The man you love will always see you; poor Calyste has but a few days before him, you will soon be rid of him. So I may go to les Touches again to-morrow, may I not? You will not refuse my arm to guide you round the shores of le Croisic and le Bourg de Batz?—If you should not come, that will be an answer, and understood by Calyste."

There were four pages more of close small writing, in which Calyste explained the terrible threat contained in these last

words, by relating the story of his boyhood and life; but he told it in exclamatory phrases; there were many of those dots and dashes lavishly scattered through modern literature in perilous passages, like planks laid before the reader to enable him to cross the gulf. This artless picture would be a repetition of our narative: if it did not touch Madame de Rochefide, it could scarcely interest those who seek strong sensations; but it made his mother weep and say:

"Then you have not been happy?"

This terrible poem of feeling that had come like a storm on Calyste's heart, and was to be sent like a whirlwind to another, frightened the Baroness; it was the first time in her life that she had ever read a love-letter.

Calyste was standing up; there was one great difficulty; he did not know how to send his letter.

The Chevalier du Halga was still in the sitting-room, where they were playing off the last pool of a very lively *mouche.* Charlotte de Kergarouët, in despair at Calyste's indifference, was trying to charm the old people in the hope of thus securing her marriage. Calyste followed his mother, and came back into the room with the letter in his breast-pocket—it seemed to scorch his heart; he wandered about and up and down the room like a moth that had come in by mistake. At last the mother and son got Monsieur du Halga into the hall, whence they dismissed Mariotte and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël's little servant.

"What do they want of the Chevalier?" said old Zéphirine to the other old maid.

"Calyste seems to me to be out of his mind," replied she. "He pays no more heed to Charlotte than if she were one of the marsh-girls."

The Baroness had very shrewdly supposed that the Chevalier du Halga must, somewhere about the year 1780, have sailed the seas of gallant adventure, and she advised Calyste to consult him.

"What is the best way to send a letter secretly to a lady?" said Calyste to the Chevalier in a whisper.

"You can give the note to her lady's-maid, with a few louis in her hand, for sooner or later the maid is in the secret, and it is best to let her know it from the first," replied the Chevalier, who could not suppress a smile; "but it is better to deliver it yourself."

"A few louis!" exclaimed the Baroness.

Calyste went away and fetched his hat; then he flew off to les Touches, and walked like an apparition into the little drawing-room, where he heard Béatrix and Camille talking. They were sitting on the divan, and seemed on the best possible terms. Calyste, with the sudden wit that love imparts, flung himself heedlessly on the divan by the Marquise, seized her hand, and pressed the letter into it, so that Félicité, watchful as she might be, could not see it done. Calyste's heart fluttered with an emotion that was at once acute and delightful, as he felt Béatrix's hand grasp his, and without even interrupting her sentence or seeming surprised, she slipped the letter into her glove.

"You fling yourself on a woman as if she were a divan," said she with a laugh.

"He has not, however, adopted the doctrine of the Turks!" said Félicité, who could not forbear from this retort.

Calyste rose, took Camille's hand, and kissed it; then he went to the piano and made every note sound in a long scale by running one finger over them. This glad excitement puzzled Camille, who told him to come to speak to her.

"What is it?" she asked in his ear.

"Nothing," said he.

"There is something between them," said Mademoiselle des Touches to herself.

The Marquise was impenetrable. Camille tried to make Calyste talk, hoping that he might betray himself; but the boy made an excuse of the uneasiness his mother would feel, and he left les Touches at eleven o'clock, not without having stood the fire of a piercing look from Camille, to whom he had never before made this excuse.

After the agitations of a night filled with Béatrix, after he

had been into the town twenty times in the course of the morning, in the hope of meeting the answer which did not come, the Marquise's maid came to the Hôtel du Guénic, and gave the following reply to Calyste, who went off to read it in the arbor at the end of the garden:—

Béatrix to Calyste.

"You are a noble boy, but you are a boy. You owe yourself to Camille, who worships you. You will not find in me either the perfections that distinguish her, or the happiness she lavishes on you. Whatever you may think, it is she who is young and I who am old; her heart is full of treasures, and mine is empty. She is devoted to you in a way you do not appreciate enough; she has no selfishness, and lives wholly in you. I should be full of doubts; I should drag you into a life that is weariful, ignoble, and spoiled by my own fault. Camille is free, she comes and goes at her will; I am a slave. In short, you forget that I love and am loved. The position in which I find myself ought to protect me against any homage. To love me, to tell me that you love me, is an insult. Would not a second lapse place me on the level of the most abandoned woman?

"You, who are young and full of delicate feeling, how can you compel me to say things which the heart cannot utter without being torn?

"I prefer the scandal of an irreparable disaster to the shame of perpetual deceit, my own ruin to the loss of my self-respect. In the eyes of many people whose esteem I value, I stand still high; if I should change, I should fall some steps lower. The world is still merciful to women whose constancy cloaks their illicit happiness, but it is pitiless to a vicious habit.

"I feel neither scorn nor anger; I am answering you with frank simplicity. You are young, you know nothing of the world, you are carried away by imagination, and, like all men of pure life, you are incapable of the reflections induced by disaster. I will go further: If I should be of all women the

most mortified; if I had horrible misery to hide; if I were deceived and deserted at last—and, thank God, nothing of that is possible—if, I say, by the vengeance of Heaven these things were, no one in the world would ever see me again. And then I could find it in me to kill the man who should speak to me of love, if a man could still find me where I should be. There you have the whole of my mind.

"Perhaps I have to thank you for having written to me. After your letter, and especially after my reply, I may be quite at my ease with you at les Touches, follow the bent of my humor, and be what you ask me to be. I say nothing of the bitter ridicule I should incur if my eyes should cease to express the sentiments of which you complain. To rob Camille a second time would be an evidence of weakness to which no woman could twice resign herself. If I loved you madly, if I were blind, if I were forgetful of everything else, I should always see Camille. Her love for you is a barrier too high to be crossed by any force, even with the wings of an angel; only demons would not recoil from such base treachery.

"In this, my child, lies a world of reasons which noble and refined women keep to themselves, of which you men know nothing, even when a man is so like a woman as you are at this moment.

"Finally, you have a mother who has shown you what a woman's life ought to be; pure and spotless, she has fulfilled her fate nobly; all I know of her has filled my eyes with tears of envy which has risen from the depths of my heart. I might have been like her! Calyste, this is what your wife ought to be; this what her life ought to be.

"I will not again cast you back maliciously, as I have done, on little Charlotte, who would bore you from the first, but on some exquisite girl who is worthy of you. If I gave myself to you, I should spoil your life. Either you would fail in faithfulness, in constancy, or you would resolve to devote your life to me: I will be honest—I should take it; I should carry you off I know not whither, far from the world; I should make you very unhappy; I am jealous. I see monsters in a drop of

water; I am in despair over odious trifles which many women put up with; there are even inexorable thoughts, originating in myself, not caused by you, which would wound me to death. When a man is not as respectful and as delicate in the tenth year of his happiness as he was on the eve of the day when he was a begger for a favor, he seems to me a wretch, and degrades me in my own eyes. Such a lover no longer believes in the Amadis and Cyrus of my dreams. In our day love is purely mythical; and in you I find no more than the fatuity of a desire which knows not its end. I am not forty; I cannot yet bring my pride to bend to the authority of experience; I know not the love that could make me humble; in fact, I am a woman whose nature is still too youthful not to be detestable. I cannot answer for my moods; all my graciousness is on the surface. Perhaps I have not suffered enough yet to have acquired the indulgent ways, the perfect tenderness that we owe to cruel deceptions. Happiness has its impertinence, and I am very impertinent. Camille will always be your devoted slave, I should be an unreasonable tyrant.

"Indeed, is not Camille set by your side by your good angel, to guard you till you have reached the moment when you must start on the life that is in store for you, and which you must not fail in? I know Félicité! Her tenderness is inexhaustible; she may perhaps lack some of the graces of her sex, but she shows that vivifying strength, that genius for constancy, and that lofty courage which make everything acceptable. She will see you marry while suffering tortures; she will find you a free Béatrix, if Béatrix fulfils your ideal of woman and answers to your dreams; she will smooth out all the difficulties in your future life. The sale of a single acre of her land in Paris will redeem your estates in Brittany; she will make you her heir—has she not already adopted you as a son? And I, alas! What can I do for your happiness? Nothing.

"Do not be false to an immeasurable affection which has made up its mind to the duties of motherliness. To me she

seems most happy—this Camille! The admiration you feel for poor Béatrix is such a peccadillo as women of Camille's age view with the greatest indulgence. When they are sure of being loved they will allow constancy a little infidelity; nay, one of their keenest pleasures is triumph over the youth of their rivals.

"Camille is superior to other women, all this does not bear upon her; I only say it to reassure your conscience. I have studied Camille well; she is in my eyes one of the grandest figures of our time. She is both clever and kind, two qualities rarely united in a woman; she is generous and simple, two more great qualities seldom found together. I have seen trustworthy treasures in the depth of her heart; it would seem as though Dante had written for her in the *Paradiso* the beautiful lines on eternal happiness which she was interpreting to you the other evening, ending with *Senza brama sicura richezza.*

"She has talked to me of her fate in life, told me all her experience, and proved to me that love, the object of our desires and dreams, had always evaded her; I replied that she seemed to me a proof of that difficulty of matching anything sublime, which accounts for much unhappiness. Yours is one of the angelic souls whose sister-soul it seems impossible to find. This misfortune, dear child, is what Camille will spare you; even if she should die for it, she will find you a being with whom you may live happy as a husband.

"I offer you a friend's hand, and trust, not to your heart, but to your sense, to find that we are henceforth to each other a brother and sister, and to terminate our correspondence, which, between les Touches and Guérande, is odd, to say the least of it.

"Béatrix de Casteran."

The Baroness, in the highest degree excited by the details and progress of her son's love affairs with the beautiful Rochefide, could not sit still in the room, where she was

working at her cross-stitch, looking up at every stitch to watch Calyste; she rose from her chair and came up to him with a mixture of diffidence and boldness. The mother had all the graces of a courtesan about to ask a favor.

"Well?" said she, trembling, but not actually asking to see the letter.

Calyste showed it her in his hand, and read it aloud to her. The two noble souls, so simple and ingenuous, discovered in this astute and perfidious reply none of the treachery and snares infused into it by the Marquise.

"She is a noble and high-minded woman!" said the Baroness, whose eyes glistened with moisture. "I will pray to God for her. I never believed that a mother could desert her husband and child and preserve so much virtue. She deserves to be forgiven."

"Am I not right to worship her?" cried Calyste.

"But whither will this love lead you?" said his mother. "Oh! my child, how dangerous are these women of noble sentiments! Bad women are less to be feared.—Marry Charlotte de Kergarouët, and release two-thirds of the family estates. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël can achieve this great end by selling a few farms, and the good soul will devote herself to improving the property. You may leave your children a noble name, a fine fortune——"

"What, forget Béatrix?" said Calyste, in a hollow voice, his eyes fixed on the floor.

He left his mother, and went up to his room to reply to this letter.

Madame du Guénic had Madame de Rochefide's words stamped on her heart: she wanted to know on what Calyste founded his hopes. At about this hour the Chevalier would be exercising his dog on the Mall; the Baroness, sure of finding him there, put on a bonnet and shawl and went out. It was so extraordinary an event to see Madame du Guénic out, excepting at church, or in one of the two pretty alleys that were frequented on fête-days, when she would accompany her husband and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, that, within

two hours, every one was saying to every one else, "Madame du Guénic was out to-day; did you see her?" Thus before long the news came to Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël's ears, and she said to her niece:

"Something very strange is happening at the du Guénics'."

"Calyste is madly in love with the beautiful Marquise de Rochefide," said Charlotte. "I should do better to leave Guérande and go back to Nantes."

At this moment the Chevalier du Halga, surprised at being sought out by the Baroness, had released Thisbe from her cord, recognizing the impossibility of attending to two ladies at once.

"Chevalier, you have had some experience in love affairs?" said the Baroness.

Captain du Halga drew himself up with not a little of the airs of a coxcomb. Madame du Guénic, without naming her son or the Marquise, told him the contents of the love letter, asking him what could be the meaning of such an answer. The Chevalier stood with his nose in the air caressing his chin; he listened with little grimaces; and at last he looked keenly at the Baroness.

"When a thoroughbred horse means to leap a fence, it goes up to it first to smell it and examine it," he said. "Calyste will be the happiest young rogue——"

"Hush!" said the Baroness

"I am dumb. In old times that was my only point," said the old man. "It is fine weather," he went on, after a pause, "the wind is northeasterly. By Heaven! how the *Belle-Poule* danced before that wind on the day—— But," he went on, interrupting himself, "I have a singing in my ears, and pains in the false-ribs; the weather will change.—You know that the fight of the *Belle-Poule* was so famous that ladies wore caps *à la Belle-Poule.* Madame de Kergarouët was the first to appear at the opera in such a head-dress. 'You are dressed for conquest,' I said to her. The words were repeated in every box."

The Baroness listened politely to the old man, who, faith-

ful to the laws of old-world etiquette, escorted her back to the little street, neglecting Thisbe. He let out the secret of Thisbe's birth. She was the granddaughter of that sweet Thisbe that had belonged to Madame la Comtesse de Kergarouët, the Admiral's first wife. This Thisbe the third was eighteen years old.

The Baroness ran lightly up to Calyste's room, as gleeful as if she were in love herself. Calyste was not there, but Fanny saw a letter on the table addressed to Madame de Rochefide, folded, but not sealed. Irresistible curiosity prompted the anxious mother to read her son's answer. The indiscretion was cruelly punished; she felt horrible anguish when she saw the precipice towards which love was driving Calyste.

Calyste to Béatrix.

"What do I care for the family of du Guénic in such times as we live in, dearest Béatrix! My name is Béatrix, the happiness of Béatrix is my happiness, her life is my life, and all my fortune is in her heart. Our lands have been in pledge these two hundred years, and may remain so for two hundred more; our farmers have them, no one can take them away. To see and love you! That is my religion.

"Marry! The idea has made me heartsick. Are there two such as Béatrix? I will marry no one but you; I will wait twenty years if I must; I am young, and you will always be beautiful. My mother is a saint, and it is not for me to judge her. She never loved! I know now how much she has lost, and what sacrifices she has made. You, Béatrix, have taught me to love my mother better; she dwells in my heart with you—there will never be any one else; she is your only rival. Is not this as much as to say that no one shares your throne? So your reassuring letter has no effect on my mind.

"As to Camille, you have only to give me a hint, and I will beg her to tell you herself that I do not love her; she is the mother of my intelligence; nothing more, nothing

less. As soon as I saw you, she became a sister to me, my friend—my man friend—what you will; but we have no claims on each other beyond those of friendship. I thought she was a woman till the moment when I first saw you. But you show me that Camille is a man; she swims, hunts, rides; she smokes and drinks; she writes, she can analyze a book or a heart; she has not the smallest weakness; she walks on in her strength; she has not your free grace, your step like the flight of a bird, your voice—the voice of love—your arch looks, your gracious demeanor. She is Camille Maupin, and nothing else; she has nothing of the woman about her, and you have everything that I love in woman; I felt from the day when I first saw you that you were mine.

"You will laugh at this feeling, but it has gone on increasing; it strikes me as monstrous that we should be divided; you are my soul, my life, and I cannot live where you are not. Let me love you! We will fly, we will go far, far from the world, into some country where you will know nobody, and where you will have no one but me and God in your heart. My mother, who loves you, will come some day to live with us. Ireland has many country houses, and my mother's family will surely lend us one. Great God! Let us be off! A boat, some sailors, and we shall be there before any one can guess whither we have fled from the world you dread so greatly.

"You have never been loved; I feel it as I re-read your letter, and I fancy I can perceive that if none of the reasons of which you speak existed you would allow yourself to be loved by me. Béatrix, a holy love will wipe out the past.

"Is it possible in your presence to think of anything but you? Oh! I love you so much that I could wish you a thousand times disgraced, so as to prove to you the power of my love by adoring you as if you were the holiest of creatures. You call my love for you an insult. Oh, Béatrix, you do not think that! The love of a 'noble' child—you call me so—would do honor to a queen.

"So to-morrow we will wander lover-like along by the rocks

and the sea, and you shall tread the sands of old Brittany and consecrate them anew for me. Give me that day of joy, and the transient alms—leaving perhaps, alas! no trace on your memory—will be a perennial treasure to Calyste——"

The Baroness dropped the letter unfinished; she knelt on a chair and put up a silent prayer to God, imploring Him to preserve her son's wits, to deliver him from madness and error, and snatch him back from the ways in which she saw him rushing.

"What are you doing, mother?" said Calyste's voice.

"Praying for you," she replied, looking at him with eyes full of tears. "I have been so wrong as to read this letter.—My Calyste is gone mad."

"It is the sweetest form of madness," said the youth, kissing his mother.

"I should like to see this woman, my child."

"Well, mamma, we shall take a boat to-morrow to cross over to le Croisic; come to the jetty."

He sealed his letter and went off to les Touches. The thing which above all others appalled the Baroness was to see that, by sheer force of instinct, feeling could acquire the insight of consummate experience. Calyste had written to Béatrix as he might have done under the guidance of Monsieur du Halga.

One of the greatest joys, perhaps, that a small mind can know is that of duping a great soul and catching it in a snare. Béatrix knew herself to be very inferior to Camille Maupin. This inferiority was not merely in the sum-total of intellectual qualities known as talent, but also in those qualities of the heart that are called passion. At the moment when Calyste arrived at les Touches, with the impetuous haste of first love borne on the pinions of hope, the Marquise was conscious of keen satisfaction in knowing herself to be loved by this charming youth She did not go so far as to wish to be his accomplice in this feeling; she made it

a point of heroism to repress this *capriccio,* as the Italians say, and fancied she would thus be on a par with her friend; she was happy to be able to make her some sacrifice. In short, the vanities peculiar to a Frenchwoman, which constitute the famous *coquetterie* whence she derives her superiority, were in her flattered and amply satisfied: she was tempted by the utmost seduction, and she resisted it; her virtues sang a sweet concert of praise in her ear.

The two women, apparently indolent, were lounging on the divan in that little drawing-room so full of harmony, in the midst of a world of flowers, with the window open, for the north winds had ceased to blow. A melting southerly breeze dimpled the salt-water lake that they could see in front of them, and the sun scorched the golden sands. Their spirits were as deeply tossed as Nature lay calm, and not less burning. Camille, broken on the wheel of the machinery she was working, was obliged to keep a guard over herself, the friendly foe she had admitted into her cage was so prodigiously keen; not to betray her secret she gave herself up to observing the secrets of nature; she cheated her pain by seeking a meaning in the motions of the spheres, and found God in the sublime solitude of the sky.

When once an infidel acknowledges God, he throws himself headlong into Catholicism, which, viewed as a system, is perfect.

That morning Camille had shown the Marquise a face still radiant with the light of her research, carried on during a night spent in lamentation. Calyste was always before her like a heavenly vision. She regarded this beautiful youth, to whom she devoted herself, as her guardian angel. Was it not he who was leading her to the supernal regions where sufferings have an end under the weight of incomprehensible immensity? Still, Camille was made uneasy by Béatrix's triumphant looks. One woman does not gain such an advantage over another without allowing it to be guessed, while justifying herself for having taken it. Nothing could be stranger than this covert moral struggle between the two

friends, each hiding a secret from the other, and each believing herself to be the creditor for unspoken sacrifices.

Calyste arrived holding his letter under his glove, ready to slip it into Béatrix's hand. Camille, who had not failed to mark the change in her guest's manner, affected not to look at her, but studied her in a mirror just when Calyste made his entrance. That is the sunken rock for every woman. The cleverest and the most stupid, the most frank and the most astute, are not then mistress of their secret; at that moment it blazes out to another woman's eyes. Too much reserve or too much freedom, an open and a beaming glance, or a mysterious droop of the eyelids—everything then reveals the feeling above all others difficult to conceal, for indifference is so absolutely cold that it can never be well acted. Women have the genius of shades of manner—they use them too often not to know them all—and on these occasions they take in a rival from head to foot at a glance; they see the slightest twitch of a foot under a petticoat, the most imperceptible start in the figure, and know the meaning of what to a man seems to have none. Two women watching one another play one of the finest comedies to be seen.

"Calyste has committed some folly," thought Camille, observing in both of them the indefinable look of persons who understand each other.

There was no formality or affected indifference in the Marquise now; she looked at Calyste as if he belonged to her. Calyste explained matters; he reddened like a guilty creature, like a happy lover. He had just settled everything for their excursion on the morrow.

"Then you are really going, my dear?" said Camille.

"Yes," said Béatrix.

"How did you know that?" said Mademoiselle des Touches to Calyste.

"I have come to ask," he replied, at a glance shot at him by Madame de Rochefide, who did not wish her friend to have any suspicion of their correspondence.

"They have already come to an understanding," said Ca-

mille to herself, catching this look by a side-glance from the corner of her eye. "It is all over; there is nothing left to me but to disappear."

And under the pressure of this thought, a deathlike change passed over her face that gave Béatrix a chill.

"What is the matter, dear?" said she.

"Nothing.—Then, Calyste, will you send on my horses and yours, so that we may find them ready on the other side of le Croisic and ride back through le Bourg de Batz. We will breakfast at le Croisic and dine here. You will undertake to find boatmen. We will start at half-past eight in the morning.—Such fine scenery!" she added to Béatrix. "You will see Cambremer, a man who is doing penance on a rock for having murdered his son. Oh! you are in a primitive land where men do not feel like the common herd. Calyste will tell you the story."

She went into her room; she was stifling. Calyste delivered his letter and followed Camille.

"Calyste, she loves you, I believe; but you are hiding something; you have certainly disobeyed my injunctions."

"She loves me!" said he, dropping into a chair.

Camille looked out at the door. Béatrix had vanished. This was strange. A woman does not fly from a room where the man is whom she loves and whom she is certain to see again, unless she has something better to do. Mademoiselle des Touches asked herself, "Can she have a letter from Calyste?" But she thought the innocent lad incapable of such audacity.

"If you have disobeyed me, all is lost by your own fault," said she gravely. "Go and prepare for the joys of to-morrow."

She dismissed him with a gesture which Calyste could not rebel against. There are silent sorrows that are despotically eloquent. As he went to le Croisic to find the boatmen, Calyste had some qualms of fear. Camille's speech bore a stamp of doom that revealed the foresight of a mother.

Four hours later, when he returned, very tired, counting

on dinner at les Touches, he was met at the door by Camille's maid, who told him that her mistress and the Marquise could not see him this evening. Calyste was surprised, and wanted to question the maid, but she shut the door and vanished.

Six o'clock was striking by the clocks of Guérande. Calyste went home, asked for some dinner, and then played *mouche,* a prey to gloomy meditations. These alternations of joy and grief, the overthrow of his hopes following hard upon what seemed the certainty that he was loved, crushed the young soul that had been soaring heavenward to the sky, and had risen so high that the fall must be tremendous.

"What ails you, my Calyste?" his mother whispered to him.

"Nothing," said he, looking at her with eyes whence the light of his soul and the flame of love had died out.

It is not hope, but despair, that gives the measure of our ambitions. We give ourselves over in secret to the beautiful poems of hope, while grief shows itself unveiled.

"Calyste, you are not at all nice," said Charlotte, after vainly wasting on him those little provincial teasing ways which always degenerate into annoyance.

"I am tired," he said, rising and bidding the party good-night.

"Calyste is much altered," said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël.

"*We* haven't fine gowns covered with lace; we don't flourish our sleeves like this; we don't sit so, or know how to look on one side and wriggle our heads," said Charlotte, imitating and caricaturing the Marquise's airs and attitude and looks. "We haven't a voice with a squeak in the head, or a little interesting cough, *heugh! heugh!* like the sigh of a ghost; we are so unfortunate as to have robust health and be fond of our friends without any nonsense; when we look at them we do not seem to be stabbing them with a dart, or examining them with a hypocritical glance. We don't know how to droop our heads like a weeping willow, and appear quite affable merely by raising it, so!"

Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël could not help laughing at her niece's performance; but neither the Chevalier nor the Baron understood this satire of the country on Paris.

"But the Marquise de Rochefide is very handsome," said the old lady.

"My dear," said the Baroness to her husband, "I happen to know that she is going to-morrow to le Croisic; we will walk down there. I should very much like to meet her."

While Calyste was racking his brain to divine why the door of les Touches should have been closed in his face, a scene was taking place between the two friends which was to have its effect on the events of the morrow. Calyste's letter had given birth to unknown emotions in Madame de Rochefide's heart. A woman is not often the object of a passion so youthful, so guileless, so sincere and absolute as was this boy's. Béatrix had loved more than she had been loved. After being a slave she felt an unaccountable longing to be the tyrant in her turn.

In the midst of her joy, as she read and re-read Calyste's letter, a cruel thought pierced her like a stab. What had Calyste and Camille been about together since Claude Vignon's departure? If Calyste did not love Camille, and Camille knew it, what did they do in those long mornings? The memory of her brain insidiously compared this remark with all Camille had said. It was as though a smiling devil held up before her, as in a mirror, the portrait of her heroic friend, with certain looks, certain gestures, which finally enlightened Béatrix. Far from being Félicité's equal, she was crushed by her; far from deceiving her, it was she who was deceived; she herself was but a toy that Camille wanted to give the child she loved with an extraordinary and never vulgar passion.

To a woman like Béatrix this discovery was a thunderbolt. She recalled every detail of the past week. In an instant Camille's part and her own lay before her in their fullest development; she saw herself strangely abased. In the rush of her jealous hatred she fancied she detected in Camille some plot of revenge on Conti. All the events of the past two years had perhaps led up to these two weeks. Once started on the downward slope of suspicions, hypotheses, and anger,

Béatrix did not check herself; she walked up and down her rooms, spurred by impulses of passion, or, sitting down now and again, tried to make a plan; still, until the dinner-hour she remained a prey to indecision, and only went down when dinner was served without changing her dress.

On seeing her rival come in, Camille guessed everything. Béatrix, in morning dress, had a cold look and an expression of reserve, which to an observer so keen as Camille betrayed the animosity of embittered feelings. Camille immediately left the room and gave the order that had so greatly astonished Calyste; she thought that if the guileless lad, with his insane adoration, came into the middle of the quarrel he might never see Béatrix again, and compromise the future of his passion by some foolish bluntness. She meant to fight out this duel of dupery without any witness. Béatrix, with no one to uphold her, must certainly yield. Camille knew how shallow her soul was, and how mean her pride, to which she had justly given the name of obstinacy.

The dinner was gloomy. Both the women had too much spirit and good taste to have any explanation before the servants, or when they might listen at the doors. Camille was gentle and kind; she felt herself so much the superior! The Marquise was hard and biting; she knew she was being fooled like a child. There was, all through dinner, a warfare of looks, shrugs, half-spoken words, to which the servants could have no clue, but which gave warning of a terrible storm. When they were going upstairs again Camille mischievously offered Béatrix her arm; the Marquise affected not to see, and rushed forward alone. As soon as coffee was served, Mademoiselle des Touches said to her servant, "You can go," and this was the signal for battle.

"The romances you act out, my dear, are rather more dangerous than those you write," said the Marquise.

"They have, however, one great merit," said Camille, taking a cigarette.

"What is that?" asked Béatrix.

"They are unpublished, my angel."

"Will that in which you have plunged me make a book?"

"I have no genius for the task of Œdipus; you have the wit and beauty of the Sphinx, I know, but do not ask me any riddles; speak out, my dear Béatrix."

"When, in order to make men happy, to amuse them, please them, dispel their annoyances, we appeal to the devil to help us——"

"The men blame us afterwards for our endeavor, and believe it to be dictated by a spirit of depravity," said Camille, taking her cigarette from her lips to interrupt her friend.

"They forget the love which carried us away, and which justified our excesses—for whither may we not be carried?—But they are only playing out their part as men, they are ungrateful and unjust," said Béatrix. "Women know each other; they know how truly lofty and noble their attitude is under all circumstances—nay, I may say how virtuous.

"Still, Camille, I have begun to perceive the truth of certain remarks I have heard you complain of. Yes, my dear, there is something of the man in you; you behave like men; nothing checks you; and if you have not all their merits, your mind conducts itself like theirs, and you share their contempt for us women. I have no reason to be pleased with you, my dear, and I am too frank to conceal the fact. Nobody, perhaps, will ever inflict so deep a wound on my heart as that I am now suffering from. Though you are not always a woman in love matters, you become one again in revenge. Only a woman of genius could have discovered the tenderest spot in our delicate sentiments—I am speaking of Calyste, and of the trickery, my dear, for that is the right word, that you have employed against me. How low you have fallen, you, Camille Maupin; and to what end?"

"Still and still more the sphinx," said Camille, smiling.

"You wanted to make me throw myself at Calyste's head; I am still too young for such doings. To me love is love, with its intolerable jealousy and despotic demands. I am not a writer; it is not possible to me to find ideas in feelings——"

"You think yourself capable of loving foolishly?" Camille asked her. "Be quite easy, you still have all your wits about you. You malign yourself, my dear; you are cold enough for your head always to remain supreme judge of the achievements of your heart."

This epigram brought the color to the Marquise's face; she shot a look full of hatred, an envenomed look, at Camille; and at once, without stopping to choose them, let fly all the sharpest arrows in her quiver. Camille, smoking her cigarette, listened calmly to this furious attack, bristling with such virulent abuse that it is impossible to record it. Béatrix, provoked by her adversary's imperturbable manner, fell back on odious personalities and Mademoiselle des Touches' age.

"Is that all?" asked Camille, blowing a cloud of smoke. "Are you in love with Calyste?"

"Certainly not."

"So much the better," replied Camille. "I am, and far too much for my happiness. He has, no doubt, a fancy for you. You are the loveliest *blonde* in the world, and I am as brown as a mole; you are slim and slender, my figure is too dignified. In short, you are young; that is the great fact, and you have not spared me. You have made an abuse of your advantages over me as a woman, neither more nor less than as a comic paper makes an abuse of humor. I have done all in my power to prevent what is now inevitable," and she raised her eyes to the ceiling. "However little I may seem to be a woman, I still have enough of the woman in me for a rival to need my help in order to triumph over me!" This cruel speech, uttered with an air of perfect innocence, went to the Marquise's heart. "You must think me a very idiotic person if you believe all that Calyste tries to make you believe about me. I am neither lofty nor mean; I am a woman, and very much a woman. Throw off your airs and give me your hand," said Camille, taking possession of Béatrix's hand. "You do not love Calyste, that is the truth—is it not? Then do not get in a rage! Be stern with him to-morrow, cold and hard, and he will end by submitting after the scolding I shall give

him, for I have not exhausted the resources of our arsenal, and, after all, pleasure always gets the better of desire.

"But Calyste is a Breton. If he persists in paying you his addresses, tell me honestly, and you can go at once to a little country-house of mine at six leagues from Paris, where you will find every comfort, and where Conti can join you. If Calyste slanders me! Why, good heavens! The purest love lies six times a day; its illusions prove its strength."

There was a proud coldness in Camille's expression that made the Marquise uneasy and afraid. She did not know what answer to make.

Camille struck the final blow.

"I am more trusting and less bitter than you," she went on. "I do not imagine that you intended to hide under recrimination an attack which would imperil my life; you know me; I should not survive the loss of Calyste, and I must lose him sooner or later. But, indeed, Calyste loves me, and I know it."

"Here is his answer to a letter from me in which I wrote only of you," said Béatrix, holding out Calyste's letter.

Camille took it and read it. As she read, her eyes filled with tears; she wept, as all women weep in acute suffering.

"Good God!" said she. "He loves her. Then I must die without ever having been understood or loved!"

She sat for some minutes with her head resting on her friend's shoulder; her pain was genuine; she felt in her own soul the same terrible blow that Madame du Guénic had received on reading this letter.

"Do you love him?" said she, sitting up and looking at Béatrix. "Do you feel for him that infinite devotion which triumphs over all suffering, and survives scorn, betrayal, even the certainty of never being loved again? Do you love him for himself, for the very joy of loving?"

"My dearest friend!" said the Marquise, much moved. "Well, be content, I will leave to-morrow."

"Do not go away; he loves you, I see it! And I love him so well that I should be in despair if I saw him miserable

and unhappy. I had dreamed of many things for him; but if he loves you, that is all at an end."

"Yes, Camille, I love him," said the Marquise with delightful simplicity, but coloring.

"You love him, and you can resist him!" cried Camille. "No, you do not love him!"

"I do not know what new virtues he has aroused in me, but he has certainly made me ashamed of myself," said Béatrix. "I could wish to be virtuous and free, so as to have something else to sacrifice to him besides the remnants of a heart and disgraceful bonds. I will not accept an incomplete destiny either for him or for myself."

"Cold brain! it can love and calculate!" cried Camille, with a sort of horror.

"Whatever you please, but I will not blight his life or be a stone round his neck, an everlasting regret. As I cannot be his wife, I will not be his mistress. He has—you will not laugh at me? No?—Well, then, his beautiful love has purified me."

Camille gave Béatrix a look—the wildest, fiercest look that ever a jealous woman flung at her rival.

"On that ground," said she, "I fancied I stood alone. Béatrix, that speech has parted us for over; we are no longer friends. We are at the beginning of a hideous struggle. Now, I tell you plainly, you must succumb or fly."

Félicité rushed away into her own room after showing to Béatrix, who was amazed, a face like an infuriated lioness.

"Are you coming to le Croisic to-morrow?" said Camille, lifting the curtain.

"Certainly," said the Marquise, loftily; "I will not fly—nor will I succumb."

"I play with my hand on the table," retorted Camille; "I shall write to Conti."

Béatrix turned as white as her gauze scarf.

"For each of us life is at stake," replied Béatrix, who did not know what to decide on.

The violent passions to which this scene had given rise be-

tween the two women subsided during the night. They both reasoned with themselves, and came back to a reliance on the perfidious temporizing which fascinates most women—an excellent system between them and men, but a bad one between woman and woman. It was in the midst of this last storm that Mademoiselle des Touches heard the great voice which dominates even the bravest. Béatrix listened to the counsels of worldly wisdom; she feared the contempt of society. So Félicité's last masterstroke, weighted with the accents of intense jealousy, was perfectly successful. Calyste's blunder was remedied, but any fresh mistake might ruin his hopes for ever.

The month of August was drawing to a close, the sky was magnificently clear. On the horizon the ocean, like a southern sea, had a hue as of molten silver, and fluttered to the strand in sparkling ripples. A sort of glistening vapor, produced by the sun's rays falling directly on the sand, made an atmosphere at least equal to that of the tropics. The salt blossomed into little white stars on the surface of the salt-pans. The laborious marshmen, dressed in white on purpose to defy the heat of the sun, were at their post by daybreak armed with their long rakes, some leaning against the mud-walls dividing the plots, and watching this process of natural chemistry, familiar to them from their infancy; others playing with their little ones and wives. Those green dragons called excise-men smoked their pipes in peace. There was something Oriental in the picture, and certainly a Parisian, suddenly dropped there, would not have believed that he was in France.

The Baron and Baroness, who had made a pretext of their wish to see how the salt-raking was going on, were on the jetty, admiring the silent scene, where no sound was to be heard but the sea moaning with regular rhythm, where boats cut through the water, and the green belt of cultivated land was all the more lovely in its effect because it is so uncommon on the desert shores of the ocean.

"Well, my friends, I shall have seen the marshes of Guérande once more before I die," said the Baron to the marshmen, who stood in groups at the fringe of the marsh to greet him.

"As if the du Guénics died!" said one of the men.

At this moment the little party from les Touches came down the narrow road. The Marquise led the way alone, Calyste and Camille followed arm-in-arm. About twenty yards behind them came Gasselin.

"There are my father and mother," said Calyste to Camille.

The Marquise stopped. Madame du Guénic felt the most vehement repulsion at the sight of Béatrix, though she was dressed to advantage, in a broad-brimmed Leghorn hat trimmed with blue cornflowers, her hair waved beneath it; a dress of gray linen stuff, and a blue sash with long ends; in short, the garb of a princess disguised as a shepherdess.

"She has no heart!" said Fanny to herself.

"Mademoiselle," said Calyste to Camille, "here are Madame du Guénic and my father."

Then he added to his parents:

"Mademoiselle des Touches and Madame la Marquise de Rochefide, *née* de Casteran—my father."

The Baron bowed to Mademoiselle des Touches, who bowed with an air of humble gratitude to the Baroness.

"She," thought Fanny, "really loves my boy; she seems to be thanking me for having brought him into the world."

"You, like me, are come to see if the yield is good; but you have more reasons than I for curiosity, mademoiselle," said the Baron to Camille, "for you have property here."

"Mademoiselle is the richest owner of them all," said one of the marshmen; "and God preserve her, for she is a very good lady!"

The two parties bowed and went their way.

"You would never suppose Mademoiselle des Touches to be more than thirty," said the good man to his wife. "She is very handsome. And Calyste prefers that jade of a Parisian Marquise to that good daughter of Brittany?"

"Alas, yes!" said the Baroness.

A boat was lying at the end of the jetty; they got in, but not in high spirits. Béatrix was cold and dignified. Camille had scolded Calyste for his disobedience, and explained to him the position of his love affair. Calyste, sunk in gloomy despair, cast eyes at Béatrix, in which love and hatred struggled for the upper hand.

Not a word was spoken during the short passage from the jetty of Guérande to the extreme point of the harbor of le Croisic, the spot where the salt is shipped, being brought down to the shore by women in large earthen pans, which they carry on their heads, holding them in such a way as to look like caryatides. These women are barefoot, and wear a very short skirt. Many of them leave the kerchief that covers their shoulders to fly loose, and several wear only a shift, and are the proudest, for the less clothes they wear the more they display their modest beauties.

The little Danish bark was taking in her cargo. Thus the landing of these two beautiful ladies excited the curiosity of the salt-carriers; and partly to escape them, as well as to do Calyste a service, Camille hurried on towards the rocks, leaving him with Béatrix. Gasselin lingered at least two hundred yards behind his master.

On the seaward side the peninsula of le Croisic is fringed with granite rocks so singularly grotesque in form that they can only be appreciated by travelers who are able from experience to make comparisons between the different grand spectacles of wild nature. The rocks of le Croisic have, perhaps, the same superiority over other similar scenes that the road to the Grande Chartreuse is admitted to have over other narrow gorges. Neither the Corsican shore, where the granite forms very remarkable reefs, nor that of Sardinia, where nature has reveled in grand and terrible effects, nor the basaltic formations of northern seas, have quite so distinctive a character. Fancy seems to have disported itself there in endless arabesques, where the most grotesque shapes mingle or stand forth. Every form may be seen there. Imagination may, perhaps, be weary of this vast collection of monsters,

among which, in furious weather, the sea rushes in, and has at last polished down all the rough edges.

Under a natural vault, arched with a boldness only faintly imitated by Brunelleschi—for the greatest efforts of art are but a timid counterpart of some work of nature—you will find a basin polished like a marble bath, and strewn with smooth, fine white sand, in which you may bathe in safety in four feet of tepid water. As you walk on you admire the cool little creeks, under shelter of porticoes rough-hewn but stately, like those of the Pitti palace—another imitation of the freaks of nature. The variety is infinite; nothing is lacking that the most extravagant fancy could invent or wish for.

There is even a large shrub of box,* a thing so rare on the shore of the Atlantic that perhaps this is the only specimen. This box-shrub, the greatest curiosity in le Croisic, where trees cannot grow, is at about a league from the port, on the utmost headland of the coast. On one of the promontories formed by the granite, rising so high above the sea that the waves cannot reach it even in the wildest storms, and facing the south, the floods have worn a hollow shelf about four feet deep. In this cleft, chance, or perhaps man, has deposited soil enough to enable a box, sown by some bird, to grow thick and closely shorn. The gnarled roots would indicate an age of at least three hundred years. Below it the rock falls sheer.

Some shock, of which the traces are stamped in indelible characters on this coast, has swept off the fragments of granite I know not whither. The sea comes, without breaking over any shoals, to the bottom of this cliff, where the water is more than five hundred feet deep. On either hand some reefs, just beneath the surface, form a sort of large *cirque,* traceable by the foaming breakers. It needs some courage and resolution to climb to the top of this little Gibraltar; its cap is almost spherical, and a gust of wind might carry the inquirer into the sea, or, which would be worse, on to

* *Buis,* "whence (says Balzac) the word *buisson,*" shrub or bush.

the rocks below. This giant sentinel is like the lantern towers of old châteaux, whence miles of country could be scanned and attacks guarded against; from its height are seen the steeple and the thrifty fields of le Croisic, the sand-hills that threaten to encroach on the arable land, and which have invaded the neighborhood of le Bourg de Batz. Some old men declare that there was, long ago, a castle on this spot. The sardine fishers have a name for this headland, which can be seen from afar at sea; but I must be forgiven for having forgotten that Breton name, as hard to pronounce as it is to remember.

Calyste led Béatrix towards this height, whence the view is superb, and where the forms of the granite surpass all the surprises they can have caused along the sandy margin of the shore.

It is vain to explain why Camille had hurried on in front; like a wounded animal, she longed for solitude; she lost herself in the grottoes, reappeared on the boulders, chased the crabs out of their holes, or discovered them in the very act of their eccentric behavior. Not to be inconvenienced by her women's skirts, she had put on Turkish trousers with embroidered frills, a short blouse, and a felt hat; and, by way of a traveler's staff, she carried a riding-whip, for she was always vain of her strength and agility. Thus attired, she was a hundred times handsomer than Béatrix; she had tied a little red China silk shawl across her bosom and knotted behind, as we wrap a child. For some little time Béatrix and Calyste saw her flitting over rocks and rifts like a will-o'-the-wisp, trying to stultify grief by facing perils.

She was the first to arrive at the box cliff, and sat down in the shade of one of the clefts, lost in meditation. What could such a woman as she do in old age, after drinking the cup of fame which all great talents, too greedy to sip the dull driblets of vanity, drain at one draught? She has since confessed that then and there, one of the coincidences suggested by a mere trifle, by one of the accidents which count for nothing with ordinary people, though they open a gulf of meditation

to a great soul, brought her to a decision as to the strange deed, which was afterwards the close of her social career. She drew out of her pocket a little box in which she had brought, in case of thirst, some strawberry pastilles; she ate several; but as she sucked them, she could not help reflecting that the strawberries, which were no more, yet lived by their qualities. Hence she concluded that it might be the same with us. The sea offered her an image of the infinite. No great mind can get away from the infinite, granting the immortality of the soul, without being brought to infer some religious future. This idea still haunted her when she smelt at her scent-bottle of Eau de Portugal.

Her manœuvres for handing Béatrix over to Calyste then struck her as very sordid; she felt the woman die in her, and she emerged the noble angelic being hitherto veiled in the flesh. Her vast intellect, her learning, her acquirements, her spurious loves had brought her face to face with what? Who could have foretold it? With the yearning mother, the consoler of the sorrowing—the Roman Church, so mild towards repentance, so poetical to poets, so artless with children, so deep and mysterious to wild and anxious spirits, that they can for ever plunge deeper into it and still satisfy their inextinguishable curiosity, which is constantly excited.

She glanced back at the devious ways to which she had been led by Calyste, comparing them to the tortuous paths among these rocks. Calyste was still in her eyes the lovely messenger from heaven, a divine leader. She smothered earthly in sacred love.

After walking on for some time in silence, Calyste, at an exclamation from Béatrix at the beauty of the ocean, very different from the Mediterranean, could not resist drawing a comparison between that sea and his love, in its purity and extent, its agitations, its depth, its eternity.

"It has a rock for its shore," said Béatrix with a laugh.

"When you speak to me in that tone," replied he with a heavenly flash, "I see you and hear you, and I can find an angel's patience; but when I am alone, you would pity me if you could see me. My mother cries over my grief."

"Listen, Calyste, this must come to an end," said the Marquise, stepping down on to the sandy path. "Perhaps we are now in the one propitious spot for the utterance of such things, for never in my life have I seen one where nature was more in harmony with my thoughts. I have seen Italy, where everything speaks of love; I have seen Switzerland, where all is fresh and expressive of true happiness, laborious happiness, where the verdure, the calm waters, the most placid outlines are overpowered by the snow-crowned Alps; but I have seen nothing which more truly paints the scorching barrenness of my life than this little plain, withered by sea-gales, corroded by salt mists, where melancholy tillage struggles in the face of the immense ocean and under the hedgerows of Brittany, whence rise the towers of your Guérande.

"Well, Calyste, that is Béatrix. Do not attach yourself to that. I love you, but I will never be yours, for I am conscious of my inward desolation. Ah! you can never know how cruel I am to myself when I tell you this. No, you shall never see your idol—if I am your idol—stoop; it shall not fall from the height where you have set it. I have now a horror of a passion which the world and religion alike reprobate; I will be humbled no more, nor will I steal happiness. I shall remain where I am; I shall be the sandy, unfertile desert, without verdure or flowers, which lies before you."

"And if you should be deserted?" said Calyste.

"Then I should go and beg for mercy. I would humble myself before the man I have sinned against, but I would never run the risk of rushing into happiness which I know would end."

"End?" cried Calyste.

"End," repeated the Marquise, interrupting the rhapsody into which her lover was plunging, by a tone which reduced him to silence.

This contradiction gave rise in the youth's soul to one of those wordless rages which are known only to those who have loved without hope. He and Béatrix walked on for about three hundred yards in utter silence, looking neither at the sea, nor the rocks, nor the fields of le Croisic.

"I should make you so happy!" said Calyste.

"All men begin by promising us happiness, and they bequeath to us shame, desertion, disgust. I have nothing of which to accuse the man to whom I ought to be faithful; he made me no promises; I went to him. But the only way to make my fault less is to make it eternal."

"Say at once, madame, that you do not love me! I who love you, know by myself that love does not argue, it sees nothing but itself, there is no sacrifice I could not make for it. Command me, and I will attempt the impossible. The man who, of old, scorned his mistress for having thrown her glove to the lions and commanding him to rescue it, did not love! He misprized your right to test us, to make sure of our love, and never to lay down your arms but to superhuman magnanimity. To you I would sacrifice my family, my name, my future life."

"What an insult lies in that word sacrifice!" replied she in a reproachful tone, which made Calyste feel all the folly of his expression.

Only women who love wholly, or utter coquettes, can take a word as a fulcrum, and spring to prodigious heights; wit and feeling act on the same lines; but the woman who loves is grieved, the coquette is contemptuous.

"You are right," said Calyste, dropping two tears, "the word can only be applied to the achievement you demand of me."

"Be silent," said Béatrix, startled by a reply in which for the first time Calyste really expressed his love. "I have done wrong enough.—Do not tempt me."

They had just reached the base of the box-cliff. Calyste felt intoxicating joys in helping the Marquise to climb the rock; she was bent on mounting to the very top. The poor boy thought it the height of rapture to support her by the waist, to feel her slightly tremulous: she needed him! The unhoped-for joy turned his brain, he saw nothing, he put his arm round her body.

"Well!" said she with an imperious look.



"Open your eyes, forgive me!" said Calyste, "or we die together"



"You will never be mine?" he asked in a voice choked by a storm in his blood.

"Never, my dear," said she. "To you I can only be Béatrix—a dream. And is not a dream sweet? We shall know no bitterness, no regrets, no repentance."

"And you will return to Conti?"

"There is no help for it."

"Then you shall never more be any man's," cried Calyste, flinging her from him with mad violence.

He listened for her fall before throwing himself after her, but he only heard a dull noise, the harsh rending of stuff, and the heavy sound of a body falling on earth. Instead of tumbling headforemost, Béatrix had turned over; she had fallen into the box-tree; but she would have rolled to the bottom of the sea nevertheless if her gown had not caught on a corner, and, by tearing, checked the force of her fall on the bush.

Mademoiselle des Touches, who had witnessed the scene, could not call out, for she was aghast, and could only signal to Gasselin to hasten up. Calyste leaned over, prompted by a fierce sort of curiosity; he saw Béatrix as she lay, and shuddered. She seemed to be praying; she thought she must die, she felt the box-tree giving away. With the sudden presence of mind inspired by love, and the supernatural agility of youth in the face of danger, he let himself down the nine feet of rock by his hands, clinging to the rough edges, to the little shelf, where he was in time to rescue the Marquise by taking her in his arms, at the risk of their both falling into the sea. When he caught Béatrix she became unconscious; but he could dream that she was his, wholly his, in this aerial bed where they might have to remain a long time, and his first feeling was an impulse of gladness.

"Open your eyes, forgive me!" said Calyste. "Or we die together."

"Die?" said she, opening her eyes, and unsealing her pale lips.

Calyste received the word with a kiss, and then was aware of a spasmodic thrill in the Marquise, which was ecstasy to

him. At that instant Gasselin's nailed shoes were audible above them. Camille followed the Breton, and they were anxiously considering the means of saving the lovers.

"There is but one way, mademoiselle," said Gasselin. "I will let myself down; they will climb up on my shoulders, and you will give them your hand."

"And you?" said Camille.

The man seemed astonished at being held of any account when his young master was in danger.

"It will be better to fetch a ladder from le Croisic," said Camille.

"She is a knowing one, she is!" said Gasselin to himself, as he went off. Béatrix, in a feeble voice, begged to be laid on the ground; she felt faint. Calyste laid her down on the cool earth between the rock and the box-tree.

"I saw you, Calyste," said Camille. "Whether Béatrix dies or is saved, this must never be anything but an accident."

"She will hate me!" he cried, his eyes full of tears.

"She will worship you," replied Camille. "This is an end to our excursion; she must be carried to les Touches.—What would have become of you if she had been killed?" she said.

"I should have followed her."

"And your mother?—and," she softly added after a pause, "and me?"

Calyste stood pale, motionless, and silent, his back against the granite. Gasselin very soon returned from one of the little farms that lie scattered among the fields, running with a ladder he had borrowed. Béatrix had somewhat recovered her strength. When Gasselin had fixed the ladder, the Marquise, helped by Gasselin, who begged Calyste to put Camille's red shawl round Béatrix under her arms, and to give him up the ends, climbed up to the little plateau, where Gasselin took her in his arms like a child, and carried her down to the shore.

"Death I would not say nay to—but pain!" said she in a weak voice to Mademoiselle des Touches.

The faintness and shock from which Béatrix was suffering made it necessary that she should be carried as far as the farm whence Gasselin had borrowed the ladder. Calyste, Gasselin,

and Camille took off such garments as they could dispense with, and made a sort of mattress on the ladder, on which they laid Béatrix, carrying it like a litter. The farm-people offered their bed. Gasselin hurried off to the spot where the horses were waiting for them, took one, and fetched a surgeon from le Croisic, after ordering the boatmen to come up the creek that lay nearest to the farm. Calyste, sitting on a low stool, answered Camille's remarks with nods and rare monosyllables, and Mademoiselle des Touches was equally uneasy as to Béatrix's condition and Calyste's.

After being bled, the patient felt better; she could speak; she consented to go in the boat; and at about five in the afternoon they crossed to Guérande, where the town doctor was waiting for her. The news of the accident had spread in this deserted and almost uninhabited land with amazing rapidity.

Calyste spent the night at les Touches at the foot of Béatrix's bed with Camille. The doctor promised that by next morning the Marquise would suffer from nothing worse than stiffness. Through Calyste's despair a great happiness beamed. He was at the foot of Béatrix's bed watching her asleep or waking; he could study her pale face, her lightest movements. Camille smiled bitterly as she recognized in the lad all the symptoms of a passion such as tinges the soul and mind of a man by becoming a part of his life at a time when no thought, no cares counteract this torturing mental process.

Calyste would never discern the real woman in Béatrix. How guilelessly did the young Breton allow her to read his most secret soul!—Why, he fancied she was his, merely because he found himself here, in her room, admiring her in the disorder of the bed. He watched Béatrix in her slightest movement with rapturous attention; his face expressed such sweet curiosity, his ecstasy was so artlessly betrayed, that there was a moment when the two women looked at each other with a smile. As Calyste read in the invalid's fine sea-green eyes a mixed expression of confusion, love, and amusement, he blushed and looked away.

"Did I not say to you, Calyste, that you men promised us happiness and ended by throwing us over a precipice?"

As he heard this little jest, spoken in a charming tone of voice, which betrayed some change in Béatrix's heart, Calyste knelt down, took one of her moist hands, which she allowed him to hold, and kissed it very submissively.

"You have every right to reject my love for ever," said he, "and I have no right ever to say a single word to you again."

"Ah!" cried Camille, as she saw the expression of her friend's face, and compared it with that she had seen after every effort of diplomacy; "love unaided will always have more wit than all the world beside.—Take your draught, my dear, and go to sleep."

This evening spent by Calyste with Mademoiselle des Touches, who read books on mystical theology, while Calyste read *Indiana*—the first work of Camille's famous rival, in which he found the captivating picture of a young man who loved with idolatry and devotion, with mysterious rapture, and for his whole life—a book of fatal teaching for him!—this evening left an ineffaceable mark on the heart of the unhappy youth, for Félicité at last convinced him that any woman who was not a monster could only be happy and flattered in every vanity, by knowing herself to be the object of a crime.

"You would never, never, have thrown me into the sea!" said poor Camille, wiping away a tear.

Towards morning Calyste, quite worn out, fell asleep in his chair. It was now the Marquise's turn to look at the pretty boy, pale with agitation and his first love-watch; she heard him murmuring words in his sleep.

"He loves in his very dreams!" said she to Camille.

"We must send him home to bed," said Félicité, awaking him.

No one was alarmed at the du Guénics'; Mademoiselle des Touches had written a few words to the Baroness.

Calyste dined at les Touches next day. He found Béatrix up, pale, languid, and tired. But there was no hardness now in her speech or looks. After that evening, which Camille

filled with music, seating herself at the piano to allow Calyste to hold and press Béatrix's hands while they could say nothing to each other, there was never a storm at les Touches. Félicité completely effaced herself.

Women like Madame de Rochefide, cold, fragile, hard, and thin—such women, whose throat shows a form of collar-bone suggestive of the feline race—have souls as pale and colorless as their pale gray or green eyes; to melt them, to vitrify these flints, a thunderbolt is needed. To Béatrix this thunderbolt had fallen in Calyste's rage of love and attempt on her life; it was such a flame as nothing can resist, changing the most stubborn nature. Béatrix felt herself softened; pure and true love flooded her soul with its soothing lapping glow. She floated in a mild and tender atmosphere of feeling hitherto unknown, in which she felt ennobled, elevated; she had entered into the heaven where, in all ages, woman has dwelt, in Brittany. She enjoyed the respectful worship of this boy, whose happiness cost her so little; for a smile, a look, a word was enough for Calyste. Such value set by feeling on such trifles touched her extremely. To this angelic soul, the glove she had worn could be more than her whole body was to the man who ought to have adored her. What a contrast!

What woman could have resisted this persistent idolatry? She was sure of being understood and obeyed. If she had bid Calyste to risk his life for her smallest whim, he would not even have paused to think. And Béatrix acquired an indescribable air of imposing dignity; she looked at love on its loftiest side, and sought in it a footing, as it were, which would enable her to remain, in Calyste's eyes, the supreme woman; she wished her power over him to be eternal. She coquetted all the more persistently because she felt herself weak.

For a whole week she played the invalid with engaging hypocrisy. How many times did she walk round and round the green lawn that spread on the garden side of the house, leaning on Calyste's arm, and reviving in Camille the torments she had caused her during the first week of her visit.

"Well, my dear, you are taking him the Grand Tour!" said Mademoiselle des Touches to the Marquise.

One evening, before the excursion to le Croisic, the two women had been discussing love, and laughing over the various ways in which men made their declarations, confessing that the most skilful, and, of course, therefore the least devoted, did not waste time in wandering through the mazes of sentimentality, and were right; so that those who loved best were, at a certain stage, the worst used.

"They set to work as la Fontaine did to get into the Academy," said Camille.

Her remark now recalled this conversation to Béatrix's memory while reproving her Machiavelian conduct. Madame de Rochefide had absolute power over Calyste, and could keep him within the bounds she chose, reminding him by a look or a gesture of his horrible violence by the seashore. Then the poor martyr's eyes would fill with tears; he was silent, swallowing down his arguments, his hopes, his griefs, with a heroism that would have touched any other woman.

Her infernal coquetting brought him to such desperation that he came one day to throw himself into Camille's arms and ask her advice. Béatrix, armed with Calyste's letter, had picked out the passage in which he said that loving was the chief happiness, that being loved was second to it, and she had made use of this axiom to suppress his passion to such a degree of respectful idolatry as she chose to permit. She reveled in having her spirit soothed by the sweet concert of praise and adoration which nature suggests to youth; and there is so much art too, though unconscious, so much innocent seductiveness in their cries, their prayers, their exclamations, their appeals to themselves, in their readiness to mortgage the future, that Béatrix took care not to answer him. She had told him she doubted! Happiness was not yet in question, only the permission to love that the lad was constantly asking for, persistently bent on taking the citadel from the strongest side—that of the mind and heart.

The woman who is bravest in word is often weak in action.

After seeing what progress he had made by his attempt to push Béatrix into the sea, it is strange that Calyste should not have continued the pursuit of happiness through violence; but love in these young lads is so ecstatic and religious that it insists on absolute conviction. Hence its sublimity.

However, one day Calyste, driven to bay by desire, complained vehemently to Camille of Madame de Rochefide's conduct.

"I wanted to cure you by enabling you to know her from the first," replied Mademoiselle des Touches, "but you spoilt all by your impetuosity. Ten days since you were her master; now you are her slave, my poor boy. So you would never be strong enough to carry out my orders."

"What must I do?"

"Quarrel with her on the ground of her cruelty. A woman is always carried away by talk; make her treat you badly, and do not return to les Touches till she sends for you."

There is a moment in every severe disease when the patient accepts the most painful remedies, and submits to the most horrible operations. Calyste was at this crisis. He took Camille's advice; he stayed at home for two days; but on the third he was tapping at Béatrix's door and telling her that he and Camille were waiting breakfast for her.

"Another chance lost!" said Camille, seeing him sneak back so tamely.

During those two days Béatrix had stopped frequently at the window whence the Guérande road could be seen. When Camille found her there she said that she was studying the effect of the gorse by the roadside, its golden bloom blazing under the September sun. Thus Camille had read her friend's secret; she had only to say the word for Calyste to be happy. But she did not speak it; she was still too much a woman to urge him to the deed so dreaded by young hearts, who seem aware of all that their ideal must lose by it.

Béatrix kept Camille and Calyste waiting some little time; if he had been any other man, the delay would have seemed significant, for the Marquise's dress suggested her wish to fas-

cinate Calyste and prevent his absenting himself again. After breakfast she went to walk in the garden, and enchanted him with joy, as she enchanted him with love, by expressing her wish to go with him again to see the spot where she had so nearly perished.

"Let us go alone," said Calyste in a broken voice.

"If I refused," said she, "I might give you reason to think that you were dangerous. Alas! as I have told you a thousand times, I belong to another, and must for ever be his alone. I chose him, knowing nothing of love. The fault was twofold, and the punishment double."

When she spoke thus, her eyes moist with the rare tears such women can shed, Calyste felt a sort of pity that cooled his furious ardor; he worshiped her then as a Madonna. We must not expect that different natures should resemble each other in the expression of their feelings, any more than we look for the same fruits from different trees. Béatrix at this moment was torn in her mind; she hesitated between herself and Calyste; between the world, where she hoped some day to be seen again, and perfect happiness; between ruining herself finally by a second unpardonable passion and social forgiveness. She was beginning to listen without even affected annoyance to the language of blind love; she allowed herself to be soothed by the gentle hands of pity. Already, many times, she had been moved to tears by hearing Calyste promising her love enough to make up for all she could lose in the eyes of the world, and pitying her for being bound to such an evil genius, to a man as false as Conti. More than once she had not silenced Calyste when she had told him of the misery and sufferings that overwhelmed her in Italy when she found that she did not reign alone in Conti's heart. Camille had given Calyste more than one lecture on this subject, and Calyste had profited by them.

"I," said he, "love you wholly; you will find in me none of the triumphs of art, nor the pleasures derived from seeing a crowd bewildered by the wonders of talent; my only talent is for loving you, my only joys will be in yours; no woman's ad-

miration will seem to me worthy of consideration; you need fear no odious rivals. You are misprized; and wherever you are accepted I desire also to be accepted every day."

She listened to his words with a drooping head, allowing him to kiss her hands, and confessing to herself silently but very readily that she was perhaps a misunderstood angel.

"I am too much humiliated," she replied; "my past deprives me of all security for the future."

It was a great day for Calyste when, on reaching les Touches at seven in the morning, he saw from between two gorse bushes Béatrix at a window, wearing the same straw hat that she had worn on the day of their excursion. He felt quite dazzled. These small details of passion make the world wider.

Only Frenchwomen, perhaps, have the secret of these theatrical touches; they owe them to their graceful wit, of which they infuse just so much into feeling as it can bear without losing its force.

Ah! how lightly she leaned on Calyste's arm. They went out together by the garden gate leading to the sand-hills. Béatrix thought their wildness pleasing; she saw the little rigid plants that grow there with their pink blossoms, and gathered several, with some of the Carthusian pinks, which also thrive on barren sands, and divided the flowers significantly with Calyste, to whom these blossoms and leaves were to have an eternally sinister association.

"We will add a sprig of box!" said she with a smile.

She stood for some time waiting for the boat on the jetty, where Calyste told her of his childish eagerness the day of her arrival.

"That expedition, which I heard of, was the cause of my severity that first day," said she.

Throughout their walk Madame de Rochefide talked in the half-jesting tone of a woman who loves, and with tenderness and freedom of manner. Calyste might believe himself loved. But when, as they went along the strand under the rocks, and

down into one of those pretty bays where the waves have thrown up a marvelous mosaic of the strangest marbles, with which they played like children at picking up the finest specimens—when Calyste, at the height of intoxication, proposed in so many words that they should fly to Ireland, she assumed a dignified and mysterious air, begged to take his arm, and went on towards the cliff she had called her Tarpeian rock.

"My dear fellow," said she, as they slowly climbed the fine block of granite she meant to take as her pedestal, "I have not courage enough to conceal all you are to me. For the last ten years I have known no happiness to compare with that we have just enjoyed in hunting for shells among those tide-washed rocks, in exchanging pebbles, of which I shall have a necklace made, more precious in my eyes than if it were composed of the finest diamonds. I have been a child again, a little girl such as I was at thirteen or fourteen, when I was worthy of you. The love I have been so happy as to inspire you with has elevated me in my own eyes. Understand this in all its magical meaning. You have made me the proudest, the happiest of my sex, and you will live longer in my memory than I probably shall in yours."

At this moment she had reached the summit of the cliff, whence the vast ocean was seen spreading on one side, and on the other the Brittany coast with its golden islets, its feudal towers, and its clumps of gorse. Never had a woman a finer stage on which to make a grand avowal.

"But," she went on, "I am not my own; I am more firmly bound by my own act than I was by law. So you are punished for my misfortune; you must be content to know that we suffer together. Dante never saw Beatrice again, Petrarch never possessed his Laura. Such disasters befall none but great souls.

"Oh! if ever I should be deserted, if I should fall a thousand degrees lower in shame and infamy, if your Béatrix is cruelly misunderstood by a world that will be loathsome to her, if she should be the most despised of women! . . . Then, beloved child," she added, taking his hand, "you will know

that she is the foremost of them all, that she could rise to heaven with your support. But then, my friend," she added, with a lofty glance at him, "when you want to throw her down, do not miss your stroke; after your love, death!"

Calyste had his arm round her waist; he clasped her to his heart. To confirm her tender words, Madame de Rochefide sealed Calyste's forehead with the most chaste and timid kiss. Then they went down the path and returned slowly, talking like two people who perfectly understand and enter into each other's minds; she believing she had secured peace, he no longer doubting that he was to be happy—and both deceived.

Calyste hoped from what Camille had observed that Conti would be delighted to seize the opportunity of giving up Béatrix. The Marquise on her part abandoned herself to the uncertainty of things, waiting on chance. Calyste was too deeply in love and too ingenuous to create the chance. They both reached les Touches in the most delightful frame of mind, going in by the garden gate, of which Calyste had taken the key.

It was now about six o'clock. The intoxicating perfumes, the mild atmosphere, the golden tones of the evening light were all in harmony with their tender mood and talk. Their steps were matched and equal as those of lovers are; their movements betrayed the unison of their minds. Such silence reigned at les Touches that the sound of the opening and closing gate echoed distinctly, and must have been heard all over the grounds. As Calyste and Béatrix had said all they had to say, and their agitating walk had tired them, they came in slowly and without speaking.

Suddenly, as she turned an angle, Béatrix was seized with a spasm of horror—the infectious dread that is caused by the sight of a reptile, and that chilled Calyste before he saw its occasion. On a bench under a weeping-ash Conti sat talking to Camille Maupin. Madame de Rochefide's convulsive internal trembling was more evident than she wished. Calyste now knew how dear she was to this woman who had just built up the barrier between herself and him, no doubt with a view to securing a few days more for coquetting before overleaping it.

In one instant a tragical drama in endless perspective was felt in each heart.

"You did not expect me so soon, I dare say," said the artist, offering Béatrix his arm.

The Marquise could not avoid relinquishing Calyste's arm and taking Conti's. This undignified transition, so imperatively demanded, so full of offence to the later love, was too much for Calyste, who went to throw himself on the bench by Camille, after exchanging the most distant greeting with his rival. He felt a hundred contending sensations. On discerning how much Béatrix loved him, his impulse was to rush at the artist and declare that she was his; but the poor woman's moral convulsion, betraying her sufferings—for she had in that one moment paid the forfeit of all her sins—had startled him so much that he remained stupefied, stricken, like her, by relentless necessity. These antagonistic impulses produced the most violent storm of feeling he had yet known since he had loved Béatrix.

Madame de Rochefide and Conti went past the seat where Calyste had thrown himself by Camille's side; the Marquise looking at her rival with one of those terrible flashes by which a woman can convey everything. She avoided Calyste's eye, and seemed to listen to Conti, who was talking lightly.

"What can they be saying?" asked Calyste of Camille.

"Dear child, you have no idea yet of the terrible hold a man has over a woman on the strength of a dead passion. Béatrix could not refuse him her hand. He is laughing at her, no doubt, over her fresh love affair; he guessed it, of course, from your behavior, and the way in which you came in together when he saw you."

"He is laughing at her!" cried the vehement youth.

"Keep calm," said Camille, "or you will lose the few chances that remain to you. If he wounds Béatrix too much in her vanities, she will trample him under foot like a worm. But he is astute; he will know how to do it cleverly. He will not suppose that the haughty Madame de Rochefide could

possibly be false to him! It would be too base to love a young man for his beauty! He will no doubt speak of you to her as a mere boy bewitched by the notion of possessing a Marquise and of ruling the destinies of two women. Finally, he will thunder with the rattling artillery of insulting insinuations. Then Béatrix will be obliged to combat him with false denials, of which he will take advantage, and remain master of the field."

"Ah!" cried Calyste, "he does not love. I should leave her free. Love demands a choice renewed every minute, confirmed every day. The morrow is the justification of yesterday, and increases our hoard of joys.—A few days later, and he would not have found us here. What brought him back?"

"A journalist's taunt," said Camille. "The opera on whose success he had counted is a failure—a dead failure. These words spoken in the greenroom, perhaps by Claude Vignon, 'It is hard to lose your reputation and your mistress both at once!' stung him, no doubt, in all his vanities. Love based on mean sentiments is merciless.

"I questioned him; but who can trust so false and deceitful a nature? He seemed weary of poverty and of love, disgusted with life. He regretted having connected himself so publicly with the Marquise, and in speaking of their past happiness fell into a strain of poetic melancholy rather too elegant to be genuine. He hoped, no doubt, to extract the secret of your love from the joy his flattery must give me."

"Well?" said Calyste, looking at Béatrix and Conti returning, and listening no longer to Camille.

Camille had prudently kept on the defensive; she had not betrayed either Calyste's secret or Béatrix's. The artist was a man to dupe any one in the world, and Mademoiselle des Touches warned Calyste to be on his guard with him.

"My dear child," said she, "this is for you the most critical moment; such prudence and skill are needed as you have not, and you will be fooled by the most cunning man on earth; for I can do no more for you."

A bell announced that dinner was served. Conti offered his arm to Camille, Béatrix took that of Calyste. Camille let the Marquise lead the way; she had a moment to look at Calyste and enjoin prudence by putting her finger to her lips.

All through dinner Conti was in the highest spirits. This was perhaps a way of gauging Madame de Rochefide, who played her part badly. As a coquette she might have deceived Conti; but, being seriously in love, she betrayed herself. The wily musician, far from watching her, seemed not to observe her embarrassment. At dessert he began talking of women and crying up their noble feelings.

"A woman who would desert us in prosperity will sacrifice everything to us in adversity," said he. "Women have the advantage of men in constancy; a woman must be deeply offended, indeed, to throw over a first lover; she clings to him as to her honor; a second love is a disgrace——" and so forth.

He was astoundingly moral; he burnt incense before the altar on which a heart was bleeding pierced by a thousand stabs. Only Camille and Béatrix understood the virulence of the acrid satire he poured out in the form of praises. Now and again they both colored, but they were obliged to control themselves; they went up to Camille's sitting-room arm-in-arm, and with one consent passed through the larger drawing-room, where there were no lights, and they could exchange a few words.

"I cannot endure to let Conti walk over my prostrate body, to give him a right over me," said Béatrix in an undertone. "The convict on the hulks is always at the mercy of the man he is chained to. I am lost! I must go back to the hulks of love!—And it is you who have sent me back. Ah, you made him come a day too late—or too soon. I recognize your infernal gift of romance. Yes, the revenge is complete, the climax perfect."

"I could threaten you that I would write to Conti, but as to doing it!—I am incapable of such a thing!" cried Camille. "You are miserable, so I forgive you."

"What will become of Calyste?" said the Marquise, with the exquisite artlessness of vanity.

"Then is Conti taking you away?" cried Camille.

"Ah! you expect to triumph?" retorted Béatrix.

The Marquise spoke the hideous words with rage, her beautiful features distorted, while Camille tried to conceal her gladness under an assumed expression of regret; but the light in her eyes gave the lie to the gravity of her face, and Béatrix could see through the mask! When they saw each other by candlelight, sitting on the divan where during the last three weeks so many comedies had been played out, where the secret tragedy of so many thwarted passions had had its beginning, the two women studied each other for the last time; they saw that they were divided by a deep gulf of hatred.

"I leave you Calyste," said Béatrix, seeing her rival's eyes. "But I am fixed in his heart, and no woman will oust me."

Camille retorted by quoting, in a tone of subtle irony which stung the Marquise to the quick, the famous speech of Mazarin's niece to Louis XIV.: "You reign, you love him, and you are going!"

Neither of them throughout this scene, which was a stormy one, noticed the absence of Calyste and Conti. The artist had remained at table with his rival, desiring him to keep him company, and finish a bottle of champagne.

"We have something to say to each other," said Conti, to anticipate any refusal.

In the position in which they stood to each other, the young Breton was obliged to obey the behest.

"My dear boy," said the singer in a soothing voice when Calyste had drunk two glasses of wine, "we are a couple of good fellows; we may be frank with each other. I did not come here because I was suspicious. Béatrix loves me." And he assumed a fatuous air. "For my part, I love her no longer; I have come, not to carry her off, but to break with her and leave her the credit of the rupture. You are young;

you do not know how necessary it is to seem the victim when you feel that you are the executioner. Young men spout fire and flame, they make a parade of throwing over a woman, they often scorn her and make her hate them; but a wise man gets himself dismissed, and puts on a humiliated expression which leaves the lady some regrets and a sweet sense of superiority. The displeasure of the divinity is not irremediable, while abdication is past all reparation.

"You, happily for you, do not yet know how our lives may be hampered by the senseless promises which women are such fools as to accept, when gallantry requires us to tie such slip-knots to divert the idle hours of happiness. The pair then swear eternal fidelity. A man has some adventure with a woman—he does not fail to assure her politely that he hopes to live and die with her; he pretends to be impatiently awaiting the demise of a husband while earnestly wishing him perfect health. If the husband should die, there are women so provincial or so tenacious, so silly or so wily, as to rush on the man, crying, 'I am free—here I am!'

"Not one of us is free. The spent ball recoils and falls into the midst of our best-planned triumph or happiness.

"I foresaw that you would love Béatrix; I left her in a situation in which she must need flirt with you without abdicating her sacred majesty, were it only to annoy that angel, Camille Maupin. Well, my dear fellow, love her; you will be doing me a service. I only want her to behave atrociously to me. I dread her pride and her virtue.—Perhaps, in spite of goodwill on my side, some time will be required for this manœuvre. On such occasions the one who does not take the first step wins. Just now, as we walked round the lawn, I tried to tell her that I knew all, and wished her joy of her happiness. Well, she was very angry.

"I, at this moment, am in love with the youngest of our singers, Mademoiselle Falcon, of the Opera, and I want to marry her. Yes, I have got so far as that! But when you come to Paris, you will say I have exchanged a Marquise for a Queen!"

Joy shed its glory on Calyste's candid face; he confessed his love; this was all that Conti wanted.

There is not a man in the world, however *blasé*, however depraved, whose love does not revive as soon as it is threatened by a rival. We may wish to be rid of a woman; we do not wish that she should throw us over. When lovers have come to this extremity, men and women alike try to be first in the field, so cruel is the wound to their self-respect. Perhaps what is at stake is all that Society has thrown into that feeling; it is indeed less a matter of self-respect than of life itself, the whole future is in the balance; we feel as if we were losing not the interest, but the capital.

Calyste, cross-examined by the artist, related all that had happened during these three weeks at les Touches, and was delighted with Conti, who concealed his rage under a semblance of delightful good-nature.

"Let us go upstairs," said he. "Women are not trustful; they will not understand how we can have sat together for so long without clutching at each other's hair; they might come down to listen.—I will do all I can for you, my dear child. I will be odious, rude, and jealous with the Marquise; I will constantly suspect her of deceiving me—there is nothing more certain to lead a woman to a betrayal; you will be happy, and I shall be free. You, this evening, must assume the part of a disconcerted lover; I shall play the suspicious and jealous man. Pity the angel for her enthralment to a man without fine feelings—weep! You can weep, you are young. I, alas, can no longer weep; it is a great advantage lost."

Calyste and Conti went upstairs. The musician, requested to sing by his young rival, chose the greatest test known to musical executants, the famous *"Pria che spunti l'aurora,"* which Rubini himself never attempts without a qualm, and in which Conti had often triumphed. Never had he been more wonderful than at this moment when so many feelings were seething in his breast. Calyste was in ecstasies. At the first note of the cavatina the singer fired a glance at the

Marquise which gave cruel significance to the words, and which was understood. Camille, playing the accompaniment, guessed that it was a command that made Béatrix bow her head. She looked at Calyste, and suspected that the boy had fallen into some snare in spite of her warnings. She was certain of it when the youth went gleefully to bid Béatrix good-night, kissing her hand and pressing it with a little knowing and confident look.

By the time Calyste had reached Guérande the ladies' maid and servants were packing Conti's traveling carriage; and "before the dawn," as he had sung, he had carried off Béatrix, with Camille's horses, as far as the first posting-house.

Under cover of the darkness, Madame de Rochefide was able to look back at Guérande, whose tower, white in the daybreak, stood out in the gray light. She gave herself up to melancholy, for she was leaving there one of the fairest flowers of life—love such as the purest girls may dream of. Respect of persons was crushing the only true love this woman had ever known, or could ever know, in all her life. The woman of the world was obeying the laws of the world, sacrificing love to appearances, as some women sacrifice it to religion or to duty. From this point of view, this terrible story is that of many women.

Next day, at about noon, Calyste arrived at les Touches. When he reached the turn in the road whence, yesterday, he had seen Béatrix at the window, he caught sight of Camille, who hurried out to meet him. At the bottom of the stairs she said this cruel word:

"Gone!"

"Béatrix?" cried Calyste, stunned.

"You were duped by Conti. You told me nothing; I could do nothing."

She led the poor boy to her little drawing-room; he sank on the divan in the place where he had so often seen the Marquise, and melted into tears. Félicité said nothing; she smoked her hookah, knowing that nothing can stem the first rush of such suffering, which is always deaf and speechless.

Calyste, since there was nothing to be done, stayed there all day in a state of utter torpor. Just before dinner, Camille tried to say a few words to him, after begging that he would listen to her.

"My dear boy," said she, "you have been the cause to me of intense suffering, and I have not, as you have, a fair future life in which to recover. To me the earth has no further springtime, the soul no further love. So I, to find comfort, must look higher.

"Here, the day before Béatrix came, I painted her portrait; I would not darken it, you would have thought that I was jealous. Now, listen to the truth. Madame de Rochefide is as far as possible from being worthy of you. The display of her fall was not necessary, but she would have been nobody but for that scandal; she made it on purpose to have a part to play. She is one of those women who prefer the parade of wrongdoing to the calm peace of happiness; they affront Society to wring from it the evil gift of a slander; they must be talked about, at whatever cost. She was eaten up by vanity. Her fortune and wit had not availed to give her the feminine dominion which she had tried to conquer by presiding over a *salon;* she had fancied that she could achieve the celebrity of the Duchesse de Langeais and the Vicomtesse de Beauséant; but the world is just, it bestows the honors of its interest only on genuine passion.

"Her flight was not justified by any obstacles. Damocles' sword did not hang glittering over her festivities; and besides, in Paris, those who love truly and sincerely may easily be happy in a quiet way. In short, if she could be tender and loving, she would not have gone off last night with Conti."

Camille talked for a long time, and very eloquently, but this last effort was in vain; she ceased on seeing a shrug, by which Calyste conveyed his entire belief in Béatrix, and she insisted on his coming down and sitting with her at dinner, for he found it impossible to eat.

It is only while we are very young that these spasmodic symptoms occur. At a later period the organs have formed

habits, and are, as it were, hardened. The reaction of the moral system on the physical is never strong enough to induce mortal illness unless the constitution preserves its original delicacy. A man can resist a violent grief which kills a youth, less because his feelings are not so strong, than because his organs are stronger. Mademoiselle des Touches was indeed alarmed from the first by Calyste's calm and resigned attitude after the first flood of tears. Before leaving the house, he begged to see Béatrix's room once more, and hid his face in the pillow on which hers had rested.

"This is folly!" said he, shaking hands with Camille and leaving her, sunk in melancholy.

He returned home, found the usual party engaged in playing *mouche,* and sat by his mother all the evening. The curé, the Chevalier du Halga, and Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël all knew of Madame de Rochefide's departure, and were all glad. Calyste would now come back to them, and they all watched, almost by stealth, seeing that he was silent. Nobody in that old house could conceive of all that this death of a first love must be to a heart as true and artless as Calyste's.

For some days Calyste went regularly to les Touches; he would wander round the grass-plot where he had sometimes walked arm-in-arm with Béatrix. He often went as far as le Croisic, and climbed the rock whence he had tried to throw her into the sea; he would sit for hours leaning on the box-shrub, for by examining the projections on the riven rock he had learnt to climb up and down the face of it. His solitary expeditions, his silence, and his lack of appetite at last made his mother uneasy. At the end of a fortnight, while these proceedings lasted—a good deal like those of an animal in its cage, and the despairing lover's cage was, to adopt la Fontaine's phrase, "the spots honored by the footstep, illuminated by the eyes" of Béatrix—Calyste could no longer cross the little inlet; he had only strength enough to drag himself as far on the Guérande road as the spot whence he had seen Béatrix at the window.

The family, glad at the departing of "the Parisians," to use the provincial phrase, discerned nothing ominous or sickly in Calyste. The two old maids and the curé, following up their plan, had kept Charlotte de Kergarouët, who, in the evening, made eyes at Calyste, and got nothing in return but advice as to her game of *mouche*. All through the evening Calyste would sit between his mother and his provincial fiancée, under the eye of the curé and of Charlotte's aunt, who, on their way home, would comment on his greater or less dejection. They took the unhappy boy's indifference for acquiescence in their plans.

One evening, when Calyste, being tired, had gone early to bed, the players all left their cards on the table, and looked at each other as the young man shut his bedroom door. They had listened anxiously to his footsteps.

"Something ails Calyste," said the Baroness, wiping her eyes.

"There is nothing the matter with him," replied Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël; "we must get him married as soon as may be."

"Do you think that will divert him?" said the Chevalier.

Charlotte looked sternly at Monsieur du Halga, whom she thought in very bad taste this evening, immoral, depraved, irreligious, and quite ridiculous with his dog, in spite of her aunt, who always took the old sailor's part.

"To-morrow morning I will lecture Calyste," said the Baron, whom they had thought asleep; "I do not want to go out of this world without having seen my grandson, a little pink-and-white du Guénic, with a Breton hood on in his cradle."

"He never speaks a word," said old Zéphirine, "no one knows what ails him; he never ate less in his life; what does he live on? If he eats at les Touches, the devil's cookery does him no good."

"He is in love," said the Chevalier, proffering this opinion with extreme timidity.

"Now, then, old dotard, you have not put into the pool,"

said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël. "When you are thinking of your young days, you forget everything else."

"Come to breakfast with us to-morrow morning," said old Zéphirine to Charlotte and Jacqueline; "my brother will talk to his son, and we will settle everything. One nail drives out another."

"Not in a Breton," said the Chevalier.

The next morning Calyste saw Charlotte arrive, dressed with unusual care, though it was still early, just as his father had ended giving him, in the dining-room, a discourse on matrimony, to which the lad could find nothing to say. He knew how ignorant his aunt, his father, and his mother were, and all their friends; he was gathering the fruits of knowledge; he found himself isolated, no longer speaking the language of the household. So he only begged a few days' respite, and his father rubbed his hands with joy, and gave new life to the Baroness by whispering the good news in her ear.

Breakfast was a cheerful meal. Charlotte, to whom the Baron had given a wink, was in high spirits. A rumor filtered through Gasselin, by which all the town knew that the du Guénics and the Kergarouëts had come to an understanding. After breakfast Calyste went out of the hall by the steps on the garden side, and was followed by Charlotte; he offered her his arm, and led her to the arbor at the bottom of the garden. The old folks, standing at the window, looked at them with a sort of pathos. Charlotte looked back at the pretty house, somewhat uneasy at her companion's silence, and took advantage of their presence to begin the conversation by saying to Calyste, "They are watching us!"

"They cannot hear us," he replied.

"No, but they can see us."

"Let us sit down," said Calyste gently, as he took her hand.

"Is it true that your banner once floated from that twisted pillar?" asked Charlotte, looking at the house as if it were her own. "It would look well there!—How happy one might be here! You will make some alterations in the arrangement of your house, will you not, Calyste?"

"I shall have no time for it, my dear Charlotte," said the young man, taking her hands and kissing them. "I will tell you my secret. I love a woman whom you have seen, and who loves me—love her too well to make any other woman happy; and I know that from our infancy you and I have always been intended to marry."

"But she is married, Calyste," said Charlotte.

"I will wait," said the boy.

"And so will I," said Charlotte, her eyes full of tears. "You cannot love that woman for long; she has gone off with a singer, they say. . . ."

"Marry some one else, my dear Charlotte," said Calyste. "With such a fortune as your aunt has to leave you, which is enormous in Brittany, you can find a better match than I. You will find a man with a title.—I have not brought you out here to tell you what you already know, but to entreat you in the name of our long friendship to take the matter upon yourself and to refuse me. Say that you can have nothing to say to a man whose heart is not free, and my passion will at least have been so far serviceable that I shall have done you no wrong. You cannot think how life weighs upon me! I cannot endure any struggle, I am as weak as a body deserted by its soul, by the very element of life. But for the grief that my death would be to my mother and my aunt, I should have thrown myself into the sea ere now, and I have never gone to the rocks of le Croisic since the day when the temptation began to be irresistible.—Say nothing of this.—Charlotte, farewell!"

He took the girl's head in his hands, kissed her hair, went out of the path under the gable, and made his escape to Camille's, where he remained till midnight.

On returning at about one in the morning, he found his mother busy with her tapestry, waiting for him. He crept in softly, took her hand, and asked:

"Is Charlotte gone?"

"She is going to-morrow with her aunt; they are both in despair.—Come to Ireland, my Calyste," she added.

"How many times have I dreamed of flying thither!" said he.

"Really!" exclaimed the Baroness.

"With Béatrix," he added.

Some days after Charlotte's departure, Calyste was walking with the Chevalier du Halga on the Mall, and he sat down in the sun on a bench whence his eye could command the whole landscape, from the weather-cocks of les Touches to the shoals marked out by the foaming breakers which dance above the reefs at high tide. Calyste was thin and pale, his strength was diminishing, he was beginning to have little periodical shivering fits, symptomatic of fever. His eyes, with dark marks round them, had the hard glitter which a fixed idea will give to lonely persons, or which the ardor of the struggle imparts to the bold leaders of the civilization of our age. The Chevalier was the only person with whom he sometimes exchanged his ideas; he had discerned in this old man an apostle of his religion, and found in him the traces of a never-dying love.

"Have you loved many women in your life?" he asked, the second time that he and the old navy man sailed in company, as the Captain called it, up and down the Mall.

"Only one," said the Captain.

"Was she free?"

"No," said the Chevalier. "Ah, I suffered much! She was my best friend's wife—my patron's, my chief's; but we loved each other so much!"

"She loved you, then?"

"Passionately," replied du Halga, with unwonted vehemence.

"And you were happy?"

"Till her death. She died at the age of forty-nine, an émigrée at Saint-Petersburg; the climate killed her. She must be very cold in her coffin! I have often thought of going to bring her away and lay her in our beloved Brittany, near me! But she rests in my heart!"

The Chevalier wiped his eyes; Calyste took his hands and pressed them.

"I cling to that dog more than to my life," said he, pointing to Thisbe. "That little creature is in every particular exactly like the dog she used to fondle with her beautiful hands, and to take on her knees. I never look at Thisbe without seeing Madame de Kergarouët's hands."

"Have you seen Madame de Rochefide?" asked Calyste.

"No," replied du Halga. "It is fifty-eight years now since I looked at a woman, excepting your mother; there is something in her coloring that is like the Admiral's wife."

Three days later the Chevalier said to Calyste as they met on the Mall:

"My boy, all I have in the world is a hundred and eighty louis. When you know where to find Madame de Rochefide, come and ask me for them, to go to see her."

Calyste thanked the old man, whose life he envied. But day by day he became more morose; he seemed to care for no one; he was gentle and kind only to his mother. The Baroness watched the progress of this mania with increasing anxiety; she alone, by much entreaty, could persuade Calyste to take some nourishment.

By the beginning of October the young fellow could no longer walk on the Mall with the Chevalier, who came in vain to ask him out with an old man's attempts at coaxing.

"We will talk about Madame de Rochefide," said he. "I will tell you the history of my first adventure.—Your son is very ill," said he to the Baroness, on the day when his urgency proved useless.

Calyste replied to all who questioned him that he was perfectly well, and, like all melancholy youths, relished the notion of death; but he never left the house now; he sat in the garden on the seat, warming himself in the pale, mild autumn sunshine, alone with his thoughts, and avoiding all company.

After the day when Calyste no longer went to call on her, Félicité begged the curé of Guérande to go to see her. The Abbé Grimont's regularity in going to les Touches almost

every morning, and dining there from time to time, became the news of the moment; it was talked of in all the neighborhood, and even at Nantes. However, he never missed spending the evening at Guérande, where despair reigned. Masters and servants, all were grieved by Calyste's obstinacy, though they did not think him in any danger. It never occurred to any one of these good people that the poor youth could die of love. The Chevalier had no record of such a death in all his travels or reminiscences. Everybody ascribed Calyste's emaciation to want of nutrition. His mother would go on her knees to beseech him to eat. To please her, Calyste tried to overcome his repugnance, and the food thus taken against his will added to the low fever that was consuming the handsome boy.

At the end of October the beloved son no longer went up to his room on the second floor; he had his bed brought down into the sitting-room, and lay there generally, in the midst of the family, who at last sent for the Guérande doctor.

The medical man tried to check the fever by quinine, and for a few days it yielded to the treatment. The doctor also ordered Calyste to take exercise, and to amuse himself. The Baron rallied his strength, and shook off his torpor; he grew young as his son grew old. He took out Calyste, Gasselin, and the two fine sporting dogs. Calyste obeyed his father, and for a few days the three men went out together; they went through the forest and visited his friends in neighboring châteaux; but Calyste had no spirit, no one could beguile him of a smile, his pale rigid face revealed a perfectly passive creature.

The Baron, broken by fatigue, fell into a state of collapse, and was forced to come home, bringing Calyste with him in the same condition. Within a few days both father and son were so ill that, at the request of the Guérande doctor himself, the two first physicians of Nantes were called in. The Baron had been quite knocked over by the visible alteration in Calyste. With the terrible prescience that nature bestows on the dying, he trembled like a child at the thought that his

family would be extinct; he said nothing, he only clasped his hands, praying as he sat in his chair, to which he was tied by weakness. He sat facing the bed occupied by Calyste, and watched him constantly. At his child's slightest movement he was greatly agitated, as if the flame of his life were fluttered by it.

The Baroness never left the room, and old Zéphirine sat knitting by the fire in a state of agonizing anxiety. She was constantly being asked for wood, for the father and son both felt the cold, and her stores were invaded. She had made up her mind to give up her keys, for she was no longer brisk enough to go with Mariotte; but she insisted on knowing everything; every minute she questioned Mariotte or her sister-in-law, and would take them aside to hear about the state of her brother and nephew.

One evening, when Calyste and his father were dozing, old Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël remarked that they would no doubt have to resign themselves to losing the Baron, whose face was quite white, and had assumed a waxen look. Mademoiselle du Guénic dropped her knitting, fumbled in her pocket, and pulled out an old rosary of black wooden beads, which she proceeded to tell with a fervency that gave such a glory of energy to her ancient parched features, that the other old maid followed her example; and then, at a sign from the curé, they all united in the silent exaltation of the old blind lady.

"I was the first to pray to God," said the Baroness, remembering the fateful letter written by Calyste, "but He did not hear me!"

"Perhaps," said the Abbé Grimont, "we should be wise to beg Mademoiselle des Touches to come to see Calyste."

"She!" cried old Zéphirine, "the author of all our woes, she who lured him away from his family, who tore him from us, who made him read impious books, who taught him the language of heresy! Curse her, and may God never forgive her! She has crushed the du Guénics!"

"She may perhaps raise them up again," said the curé in

a mild voice. "She is a saintly and virtuous woman: I am her warranty. She has none but good intentions as regards Calyste. May she be able to realize them!"

"Give me notice the day she is to set foot here, and I will go out," cried the old lady. "She has killed both father and son. Do you suppose I cannot hear how weak Calyste's voice is?—he hardly has strength to speak."

Just then the three physicians came in. They wearied Calyste with questions. As to his father, their examination was brief; they knew all in a moment; the only wonder was that he still lived. The Guérande doctor quietly explained to the Baroness that it would probably be necessary to take Calyste to Paris to consult the most eminent authorities, for that it would cost more than a hundred louis to bring them to Guérande.

"A man must die of something, but love is nothing," said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël.

"Alas, whatever the cause may be, Calyste is dying," said his mother. "I recognize every symptom of consumption, the most horrible malady of my native land."

"Calyste is dying?" said the Baron, opening his eyes, whence trickled two large tears which, caught in the many furrows of his face, slowly fell to the bottom of his cheeks—the only tears, no doubt, that he had ever shed in his life.

He dragged himself on to his feet, shuffled to his son's bed, took his hands, and looked at him.

"What do you want, father?" said the boy.

"I want you to live!" cried the Baron.

"I cannot live without Béatrix," said Calyste to the old man, who sank back into his chair.

"Where can I find a hundred louis to fetch the doctors from Paris?" cried the Baroness. "We have yet time."

"A hundred louis!" exclaimed Zéphirine. "Will they save him?"

Without waiting for her sister-in-law's reply, the old woman put her hands into her pocket-holes and untied an under petticoat, which fell with a heavy sound. She knew so well

where she had sewn in her louis, that she ripped them out with a rapidity that seemed magical. The gold pieces rang as they dropped one by one. Old Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël looked on with stupefied amazement.

"They can see you!" she whispered in her friend's ear.

"Thirty-seven," said Zéphirine, counting the gold.

"Every one will know how much you have."

"Forty-two."

"Double louis, and all new! how did you get them, you who cannot see them?"

"I could feel them.—Here are a hundred and four louis," cried Zéphirine. "Is that enough?"

"What are you doing?" asked the Chevalier du Halga, coming in, and unable to imagine what was the meaning of the old lady's holding out her lap full of louis d'or.

Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël explained the case in two words.

"I had heard of it," said he, "and I came to bring you a hundred and forty louis I had kept at Calyste's service, as he knows."

The Chevalier took out of his pocket two rolls of coin, which he showed them. Mariotte, seeing all these riches, bid Gasselin lock the door.

"Gold will not restore him to health," said the Baroness, in tears.

"But it may enable him to run after his Marquise," said du Halga. "Come, Calytse!"

Calyste sat up in bed, and exclaimed gleefully:

"Let us be off!"

"Then he will live," said the Baron, in a stricken voice, "and I may die.—Go and fetch the curé."

These words struck them all with terror. Calyste, seeing his father turn ghastly pale from the painful agitation of this scene, could not restrain his tears. The curé, who knew the decision the doctors had come to, had gone off to fetch Mademoiselle des Touches; for at this moment he displayed as much admiration for her as he had not long since felt repugnance, and could defend her as a pastor defends one of the favorites of his flock.

On hearing of the Baron's desperate extremity, a crowd gathered in the little street; the peasants, the marshmen, and the townsfolk all kneeling in the courtyard, while the priest administered the last sacrament to the old Breton warrior. Everybody was deeply touched to think of the father dying by the bed of his sick son. The extinction of the old family was regarded as a public calamity.

The ceremony struck Calyste; for a while his grief silenced his passion. All through the death struggles of this heroic defender of the Monarchy he remained on his knees, watching the approach of death, and weeping.

The old man died in his chair, in the presence of the assembled family.

"I die faithful to the King and religion. Great God, as the reward of my efforts, let Calyste live!" he said.

"I will live, father, and obey you," replied the young man.

"If you would make my death as easy as Fanny has made my life, swear that you will marry."

"I promise it, father."

It was touching to see Calyste, or rather his ghost, leaning on the old Chevalier, a spectre leading a shade, following the Baron's bier as chief mourner. The church and the little square before the porch were full of people, who had come from ten leagues round.

The Baroness and Zéphirine were deeply grieved when they saw that, in spite of his efforts to obey his father, Calyste was still sunk in an ominous stupor. On the first day of their mourning the Baroness led her son to the seat at the bottom of the garden, and questioned him. Calyste replied with gentle submissiveness, but his answers were heartbreaking.

"Mother," said he, "there is no life left in me; what I eat does not nourish me, the air I breathe into my lungs does not renew my blood; the sun seems cold to me, and when it shines for you on the front of the house as at this moment, where you see carvings bathed in light, I see dim forms wrapped in mist. If Béatrix were here, all would be bright once more.

There is but one thing in the world that has her color and form—this flower and these leaves," and he drew out of his bosom the withered blossoms that the Marquise had given him.

The Baroness dared ask him no more; the madness betrayed by his replies seemed worse than the sorrow of his silence.

But Calyste was thrilled as he caught sight of Mademoiselle des Touches through the windows at opposite ends of the room. Félicité reminded him of Béatrix. Thus it was to her that the two women owed the one gleam of joy that lightened their griefs.

"Well, Calyste," said Mademoiselle des Touches, when she saw him, "the carriage is ready; we will go together and find Béatrix. Come."

The pale, thin face of the boy, all in black, was brightened by a flush, and a smile dawned on his features.

"We will save him!" said Mademoiselle des Touches to the mother, who wrung her hand, shedding tears of joy.

A week after the Baron's death, Mademoiselle des Touches, the Baronne du Guénic, and Calyste set out for Paris, leaving the business matters in the hands of old Mademoiselle.

Félicité's affection for Calyste had planned a brilliant future for the poor boy. She was connected with the Grandlieus, and the ducal branch was ending in a family of five daughters. She had written to the Duchesse de Grandlieu, telling her the whole story of Calyste, and announcing her intention of selling her house in the Rue du Mont-Blanc, for which a company of speculators had offered two million five hundred thousand francs. Her business manager had already bought for her one of the finest houses in the Rue de Bourbon, at a cost of seven hundred thousand francs. Out of the surplus money from the sale of the house in the Rue du Mont-Blanc she meant to devote one million to repurchasing the estates of the du Guénics, and would leave the rest of her fortune among the five de Grandlieu girls.

Félicité knew the plans made by the Duke and Duchess, who intended that their youngest daughter should marry the Vicomte de Grandlieu, the heir to their titles; Clotilde-Frédérique, the second, meant, she knew, to remain unmarried, without taking the veil, however, as her eldest sister had done; so the only one to be disposed of was Sabine, a pretty creature just twenty years of age, on whom she counted to cure Calyste of his passion for Madame de Rochefide.

During their journey Félicité told Madame du Guénic of all these plans. The house in the Rue de Bourbon was now being furnished, and in it Calyste was to live if these schemes should succeed.

They all three went straight to the Hôtel Grandlieu, where the Baroness was received with all the respect due to her name as a girl and as a wife. Mademoiselle des Touches, of course, advised Calyste to see all he could of Paris while she made inquiries as to where Béatrix might be, and she left him to the fascinations of every kind which awaited him there. The Duchess, her daughters, and their friends did the honors of the capital for Calyste just at the season when it was beginning to be gayest.

The bustle of Paris entirely diverted the young Breton's mind. He fancied there was some likeness in the minds of Madame de Rochefide and Sabine de Grandlieu, who at that time was certainly one of the loveliest and most charming girls in Paris society, and he thenceforward paid an amount of attention to her advances which no other woman would have won from him. Sabine de Grandlieu played her part all the more successfully because she liked Calyste.

Matters were so skilfully managed that in the course of the winter of 1837 the young Baron, who had recovered his color and youthful beauty, could listen without disgust when his mother reminded him of his promise to his dying father, and spoke of his marrying Sabine de Grandlieu. Still, while keeping his promise, he concealed an indifference which the Baroness could discern, while she hoped it might be dispelled by the satisfactions of a happy home.

On the day when the Grandlieu family and the Baroness, supported on this occasion by her relations from England, held a sitting in the large drawing-room of the Duke's house, while Leopold Hannequin, the family notary, explained the conditions of the marriage contract before reading it through, Calyste, whose brow was clouded, as all could see, refused point-blank to accept the benefactions offered to him by Mademoiselle des Touches. He still trusted to Félicité's devotion, and believed that she was seeking Béatrix.

At this moment, in the midst of the dismay of both families, Sabine came in, dressed so as to remind Calyste of the Marquise de Rochefide, though her complexion was dark, and she placed in Calyste's hand the following letter:—

Camille to Calyste.

"Calyste, before retiring into my cell as a novice, I may be allowed to glance back at the world I am quitting to enter the world of prayer. This glance is solely for you, who in these later days have been all the world to me. My voice will reach you, if I have calculated exactly, in the middle of a ceremony which I could not possibly witness. On the day when you stand before the altar, to give your hand to a young and lovely girl who is free to love before Heaven and the world, I shall be in a religious house at Nantes—before the altar too, but plighted for ever to Him who can never deceive nor disappoint.

"I write, not to sadden you, but to beseech you not to allow any false delicacy to hinder the good I have always wished to do you since our first meeting. Do not deny the right I have so hardly earned. If love is suffering, then I have loved you well, Calyste; but you need feel no remorse. The only pleasures I have known in my life I owe to you, and the pain has come from myself. Compensate me for all this past suffering by giving me one eternal joy. Let me, dear, be in some sort a perfume in the flowers of your life, and mingle with it always without being importunate. I shall certainly owe to

you my happiness in life eternal; will you not let me pay my debt by the offering of some transient and perishable possessions? You will not fail in generosity? You will not regard this as the last subterfuge of scorned love?

"Calyste, the world was nothing to me without you; you made it a fearful desert, and you have led the infidel Camille Maupin, the writer of books and dramas, which I shall solemnly disown—you have led that audacious and perverted woman, tied hand and foot, to the throne of God. I am now, what I ought always to have been, an innocent child. Yes, I have washed my robes in the tears of repentance, and I may go to the altar presented by an angel—by my dearly-loved Calyste! How sweet it is to call you so—now that my resolution has sanctified the word. I love you without self-interest, as a mother loves her son, as the Church loves her children. I can pray for you and yours without the infusion of a single desire but that for your happiness.

"If you knew the supreme peace in which I live after having lifted myself by thought above the petty interests of the world, and how exquisite is the feeling of having done one's duty, in accordance with your noble motto, you would enter on your happy life with a firm step, nor glance behind nor around you. So I am writing to beseech you to be true to yourself and to your family.

"My dear, the society in which you must live cannot exist without the religion of duty; and you will misunderstand life, as I have misunderstood it, if you give yourself up to passion and to fancy as I have done. Woman can only be equal with man by making her life a perpetual sacrifice, as man's must be perpetual action. Now my life has been, as it were, one long outbreak of egoism. God perhaps brought you in its evening to my door, as a messenger charged with my punishment and pardon. Remember this confession from a woman to whom fame was a pharos whose light showed her the right way. Be great! sacrifice your fancy to your duties as the head of a house, as husband and father. Raise the downtrodden banner of the old du Guénics; show the present age, when principles

and religion are denied, what a gentleman may be in all his glory and distinction.

"Dear child of my soul, let me play the mother a little: the angelic Fanny will not be jealous of a woman dead to the world, of whom you will henceforth know nothing but that her hands are always raised to Heaven. In these days the nobility need fortune more than ever, so accept a part of mine, dear Calyste, and make a good use of it. It is not a gift; it is trust-money. I am thinking more of your children and your old Breton estate than of yourself when I offer you the interest which time has accumulated for me on my Paris property."

"I am ready to sign," said the young Baron, to the great delight of the assembly.

PART III

RETROSPECTIVE ADULTERY

THE week after this, when the marriage service had been celebrated at Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, at seven in the morning—as was the custom in some families of the Faubourg Saint-Germain—Calyste and Sabine got into a neat traveling-carriage in the midst of the embracing, congratulations, and tears of a score of persons gathered in groups under the awning of the Hôtel de Grandlieu. The congratulations were offered by the witnesses and the men; the tears were to be seen in the eyes of the Duchesse de Grandlieu and her daughter Clotilde—both tremulous, and from the same reflection.

"Poor Sabine! she is starting in life at the mercy of a man who is married not altogether willingly."

Marriage does not consist solely of pleasures, which are as fugitive under those conditions as under any others; it involves a consonance of tempers and physical sympathies, a concord of character, which make this social necessity an ever new problem. Girls to be married know the conditions and dangers of this lottery fully as well as their mothers do; this is why women shed tears as they look on at a marriage, while men smile; the men think they risk nothing; the women know pretty well how much they risk.

In another carriage, which had started first, was the Baronne du Guénic, to whom the Duchess had said at parting:

"You are a mother though you have only a son. Try to fill my place to my darling Sabine."

On the box of that carriage sat a groom serving as a courier, and behind it two ladies'-maids. The four postilions, in splendid liveries—each carriage having four horses—all had

nosegays in their button-holes and favors in their hats. The Duc de Grandlieu, even by paying them, had the greatest difficulty in persuading them to remove the ribands. The French postilion is eminently intelligent, but he loves his joke; and these took the money, and replaced the favors outside the city walls.

"Well, well, good-bye, Sabine!" said the Duchess. "Remember your promise, and write often.—Calyste, I say no more, but you understand me."

Clotilde, leaning on the arm of her youngest sister Athénaïs, who was smiling at the Vicomte Juste de Grandlieu, gave the bride a keen glance through her tears, and watched the carriage till it disappeared amid the repeated salvo of four postilions' whips, noisier than pistol shots. In a very short time the gay procession reached the Esplanade of the Invalides, followed the Quay to the Pont d'Iéna, the Passy Gate, the Versailles avenue, and, finally, the highroad to Brittany.

Is it not strange, to say the least, that the artisan class of Switzerland and Germany, and the greatest families of France and England, obey the same custom, and start on a journey after the nuptial ceremony? The rich pack themselves into a box on wheels. The poor walk gaily along the roads, resting in the woods, feeding at every inn, so long as their glee, or rather their money, holds out. A moralist would find it difficult to decide which is the finest flower of modesty—that which hides from the public eye, inaugurating the domestic hearth and bed as the worthy citizen does, or that which flies from the family and displays itself in the fierce light of the highroad to the eyes of strangers? Refined natures must crave for solitude, and avoid the world and the family alike. The rush of love that begins a marriage is a diamond, a pearl, a gem cut by the highest of all arts, a treasure to be buried deep in the heart.

Who could tell the tale of a honeymoon excepting the bride? And how many women would here admit that this period of uncertain duration—sometimes of only a single night—is the preface to married life? Sabine's first three

letters to her mother betrayed a state of things which, unfortunately, will not seem new to some young wives, nor to many old women. All who have become sick-nurses, so to speak, to a man's heart have not found it out so quickly as Sabine did. But the girls of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, when they are keen-witted, are women already in mind. Before marriage, they have received the baptism of fine manners from the world and from their mothers. Duchesses, anxious to perpetuate the tradition, are often unaware of all the bearings of their lessons when they say to their daughters —"No one ever does that."—"Do not laugh at such things."—"You must never fling yourself on a sofa, you must sit down quietly."—"Never do such a thing again."—"It is most incorrect, my dear!" and so forth.

And critical middle-class folks refuse to recognize any innocence or virtue in young creatures who, like Sabine, are virgin souls, but perfected by cleverness, by the habits of good style, and good taste, knowing from the age of sixteen how to use an opera glass. Sabine, to lend herself to Mademoiselle des Touches' schemes for her marriage, could not but be of the school of Mademoiselle de Chaulieu. This innate mother-wit, these gifts of birth, may perhaps make this young wife as interesting as the heroine of the *Mémoires de deux jeunes Mariées,* in which we see the vanity of such social advantages in the great crisis of married life, where they are often crushed under the double weight of unhappiness and passion.

I

To Madame la Duchesse de Grandlieu

GUERANDE, *April* 1838.

"DEAR MOTHER,—You can easily understand why I did not write to you on the journey; one's mind turns like the wheels. So here I have been these two days in the depths of Brittany, at the Hôtel du Guénic, a house carved all over like a cocoanut box. Notwithstanding the affectionate at-

tentions of Calyste's family, I feel an eager longing to fly away to you, and tell you a thousand things which I feel can only be told to a mother.

"Dear mamma, Calyste married me cherishing a great sorrow in his soul; we all of us know it, and you did not disguise the difficulties of my position; but, alas! they are greater than you imagined. Oh, dear mamma, how much experience we may acquire in a few days—why should I not say to you in a few hours? All your counsels proved useless, and you will understand why by this simple fact: I love Calyste as if he were not my husband. That is to say, if I were married to another man and were traveling with Calyste, I should love him and hate my husband. Consider him, then, as a man loved entirely, involuntarily, absolutely, and as many more adverbs as you choose to supply. So, in spite of your warnings, my slavery is an established fact.

"You advised me to keep myself lofty, haughty, dignified, and proud, in order to bring Calyste to a state of feeling which should never undergo any changes throughout life; in the esteem and respect which must sanctify the wife in the home and family. You spoke warmly, and with reason, no doubt, against the young women of the day who, under the excuse of living on good terms with their husbands, begin by being docile, obliging, submissive, with a familiarity, a free-and-easyness which are, in your opinion, rather too *cheap* —a word I own to not understanding yet, but we shall see by and by—and which, if you are right, are only the early and rapid stages towards indifference and perhaps contempt.

"'Remember that you are a Grandlieu,' you said in my ear.

"This advice, full of the maternal eloquence of Dedalus, has shared the fate of mythological things. Dear, darling mother, could you believe that I should begin by the catastrophe which, according to you, closes the honeymoon of the young wives of our day?

"When Calyste and I were alone in the carriage, each thought the other as silly as himself, as we both perceived

the importance of the first word, the first look; and each, bewildered by the marriage sacrament, sat looking out of a window. It was so preposterous that, as we got near the city gate, Monsieur made me a little speech in a rather broken voice—a speech prepared, no doubt, like all extempore efforts, to which I listened with a beating heart, and which I take the liberty of epitomizing for your benefit.

"'My dear Sabine,' said he, 'I wish you to be happy, and, above all, to be happy in your own way,' said he. 'In our position, instead of deceiving each other as to our characters and sentiments by magnanimous concessions, let us both be now what we should be a few years hence. Regard me as being your brother, as I would wish to find a sister in you.'

"Though this was most delicately meant, I did not find in this first speech of married love anything answering to the eagerness of my soul, and, after replying that I felt quite as he did, I remained pensive. After this declaration of rights to be equally cold, we talked of the weather, the dust, the houses, and the scenery with the most gracious politeness, I laughing a rather forced laugh, he lost in dreams.

"Finally, as we left Versailles, I asked Calyste pointblank —calling him 'my dear Calyste,' as he called me 'my dear Sabine'—if he could tell me the history of the events which had brought him to death's door, and to which I owed the honor of being his wife. He hesitated for a long time. In fact, it was the subject of a little discussion lasting through three stages; I trying to play the part of a wilful girl determined to sulk; he debating with himself on the ominous question asked as a challenge to Charles X. by the public press: 'Will the King give in?' At last, when we had left Verneuil, and after swearing often enough to satisfy three dynasties that I would never remind him of his folly, never treat him coldly, and so on, he painted his passion for Madame de Rochefide: 'I do not wish,' he said, in conclusion, 'that there should be any secrets between us.'

"Poor dear Calyste did not know, I suppose, that his friend

Mademoiselle des Touches and you had been obliged to tell me all; for a girl cannot be dressed as I was on the day of the contract without being taught her part.

"I cannot but tell everything to so good a mother as you are. Well, then, I was deeply hurt at seeing that he had yielded far less to my request than to his own wish to talk about the unknown object of his passion. Will you blame me, dearest mother, for having wanted to know the extent of this sorrow, of the aching wound in his heart of which you had told me?

"Thus, within eight hours of having been blessed by the Curé of Saint-Thomas d'Aquin, your Sabine found herself in the rather false position of a young wife hearing from her husband's own lips his confidences as to a cheated passion and the misdeeds of a rival. Yes, I was playing a part in the drama of a young wife, officially informed that she owed her marriage to the disdain of an old beauty!

"By this narrative I gained what I sought. 'What?' you will ask. Oh, my dear mother! on clocks and chimney-carvings I have often enough seen Loves leading each other on, hand-in-hand, to put the lesson into practice! Calyste ended the romance of his memories with the most vehement protestations that he had entirely got over what he called his madness. Every protest needs a signature. The happy hapless one took my hand, pressed it to his lips, and then held it for a long time. A declaration followed. This one seemed to me more suitable than the first to our position as man and wife, though our lips did not utter a single word. This happiness I owed to my spirited indignation against the bad taste of a woman so stupid as not to love my handsome and delightful Calyste.

"I am called away to play a game of cards, which I have not yet mastered. I will continue my letter to-morrow. That I should have to leave you just now to make the fifth at a game of *mouche!* Such a thing is impossible anywhere but in the depths of Brittany.

"*May.*

"I resume the tale of my Odyssey. By the third day your children had dropped the ceremonial *vous* and adopted the lover-like *tu*. My mother-in-law, delighted to see us happy, tried to fill your place, dearest mother; and, as is always the case with those who take a part with the idea of effacing past impressions, she is so delightful that she has been almost as much to me as you could be. She, no doubt, guessed how heroic my conduct was; at the beginning of our journey she hid her anxiety too carefully not to betray it by her excessive precaution.

"When I caught sight of the towers of Guérande I said in your son-in-law's ear, 'Have you quite forgotten her?'

"And my husband, now my angel, had perhaps never known the depth of an artless and genuine affection, for that little speech made him almost crazy with joy.

"Unluckily, my desire to make him forget Madame de Rochefide led me too far. How could I help it! I love him, and I am almost Portuguese, for I am like you rather than my father. Calyste accepted everything, as spoilt children do; he is above everything an only son. Between you and me, I will never let my daughter—if I ever should have a daughter—marry an only son. It is quite enough to have to manage one tyrant, and in an only son there are several. And so we exchanged parts; I played the devoted wife. There are dangers in self-devotion to gain an end; it is loss of dignity. So I have to announce the wreck in me of that semi-virtue; dignity is really no more than a screen set up by pride, behind which we may fume at our ease. How could I help myself, mamma; you were not here, and I looked into a gulf. If I had maintained my dignity, I should have known the chill pangs of a sort of brotherliness, which would certainly have become simple indifference. And what future would have lain before me?

"As a result of my devotion, I am Calyste's slave. Shall I get out of that position? We shall see; for the present I like it. I love Calyste—I love him entirely with the frenzy

of a mother who thinks everything right that her son can do, even when he punishes her a little.

"*May* 15.

"So far, dear mother, marriage has come to me in a most attractive form. I lavish all my tenderest affection on the handsomest of men, who was thrown over by a fool for the sake of a wretched singer—for the woman is evidently a fool, and a fool in cold blood, the worst sort of fool. I am charitable in my lawful passion, and heal his scars while inflicting eternal wounds on myself. Yes, for the more I love Calyste, the more I feel that I should die of grief if anything put an end to our present happiness. And I am worshiped, too, by all the family, and by the little company that meets at the Hôtel du Guénic, all of them born figures in some ancient tapestry, and having stepped out of it to show that the impossible can exist. One day when I am alone I will describe them to you—Aunt Zéphirine, Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël, the Chevalier du Halga, the Demoiselles de Kergarouët, and the rest, down to the two servants, whom I shall be allowed, I hope, to take to Paris—Mariotte and Gasselin, who regard me as an angel alighted on earth from heaven, and who are still startled when I speak to them—they are all figures to put under glass shades.

"My mother-in-law solemnly installed us in the rooms she and her deceased husband had formerly inhabited. The scene was a touching one. 'I lived all my married life here,' said she, 'quite happy. May that be a happy omen for you, my dear children!'

"And she has taken Calyste's room. The saintly woman seemed to wish to divest herself of her memories and her admirable life as a wife to endow us with them.

"The province of Brittany, this town, this family with its antique manners—the whole thing, in spite of the absurdities, which are invisible to any but a mocking Parisian woman, has something indescribably grandiose, even in its details, to be expressed only by the word sacred. The tenants of the vast estates of the du Guénics, repurchased, as you know,

by Mademoiselle des Touches—whom we are to visit in the convent—all came out to receive us. These good folks in their holiday dresses, expressing the greatest joy at greeting Calyste as really their master once more, made me understand what Brittany is, and feudality, and old France. It was a festival I will not write about; I will tell you when we meet. The terms of all the leases have been proposed by the tenants themselves, and we are to sign after the tour of inspection we are to make round *our* lands that have been pledged this century and a half. Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël tells us that these yeomen have assessed the returns with an accuracy that Paris folk would not believe in. We are to start three days hence, and ride everywhere.

"On my return I will write again, dear mother; but what can I have to say to you, since my happiness is already complete? So I must write what you know already, namely, how much I love you."

II

From the same to the same

"After playing the part of the Lady of the Castle, worshiped by her vassals as though the revolutions of 1830 and 1789 had never torn down our banners; after riding through woods, halting at farms, dining at old tables spread with cloths a century old, and groaning under Homeric dishes served in antediluvian plate; after drinking delicious wine out of goblets like those we see in the hands of conjurors; after salvos fired at dessert, and deafening shouts of 'Vive les du Guénics!' and balls, where the orchestra is a bagpipe, which a man blows at for ten hours on end! and such bouquets! and brides who insist on having our blessing! and healthy fatigue, cured by such sleep as I had never known, and a delicious waking to love as radiant as the sun that shines above us, twinkling on a myriad insects that hum in genuine Breton! Finally, after a grotesque visit to the Castle of du

Guénic, where the windows are open gates, and the cows might pasture on the grass grown in the halls; but we have vowed to restore it, and furnish it, so as to come here every year and be hailed by the vassals of the clan, one of whom carried our banner.—Ouf! here I am at Nantes.

"What a day we had when we went to le Guénic! The priest and all the clergy came out to meet us, all crowned with flowers, mother, and blessed us with such joy! The tears come into my eyes as I write about it. And my lordly Calyste played his part as a liege like a figure of Walter Scott's. Monsieur received homage as if we had stepped back into the thirteenth century. I heard girls and women saying, 'What a handsome master we have!' just like the chorus of a comic opera.

"The old folks discussed Calyste's likeness to the du Guénics whom they had known. Oh! Brittany is a noble and sublime country, a land of faith and religion. But progress has an eye on it; bridges and roads are to be made, ideas will invade it, and farewell to the sublime. The peasants will certainly cease to be as free and proud as I saw them when it has been proved to them that they are Calyste's equals, if, indeed, they can be brought to believe it.

"So after the poetry of this pacific restoration, when we had signed the leases we left that delightful country, flowery and smiling, gloomy and barren by turns, and we came here to kneel before her to whom we owe our good fortune, and give her thanks. Calyste and I both felt the need to thank the novice of the Visitation. In memory of her he will bear on his shield quarterly the arms of des Touches: *party per pale engrailed or and vert.* He will assume one of the silver eagles as a supporter, and place in its beak the pretty womanly motto, '*Souviègne-vous.*'—So we went yesterday to the Convent of the Ladies of the Visitation, conducted by the Abbé Grimont, a friend of the Guénic family; he told us that your beloved Félicité, dear mamma, is a saint; indeed, she can be no less to him, since this illustrious conversion has led to his being made vicar-general of the diocese. Mademoiselle

des Touches would not see Calyste; she received me alone. I found her a little altered, paler and thinner; she seemed extremely pleased by my visit.

" 'Tell Calyste,' said she in a low voice, 'that my not seeing him is a matter of conscience and self-discipline, for I have permission; but I would rather not purchase the happiness of a few minutes with months of suffering! Oh, if you could only know how difficult I find it to answer when I am asked, "What are you thinking about?" The mistress of the novices can never understand the vastness and multiplicity of the ideas which rush through my brain like a whirlwind. Sometimes I see Italy once more, or Paris, with all their display, always with Calyste, who,' she said with the poetic turn you know so well, 'is the sun of my memory. I was too old to be admitted to the Carmelites, so I chose the Order of Saint Francis de Sales, solely because he said, "I will have you bareheaded instead of barefoot!" disapproving of such austerities as only mortify the body. In fact, the head is the sinner. The holy Bishop did well to make his rule stern to the brain and merciless to the will!—This was what I needed, for my mind is the real culprit; it deceived me as to my heart till the age of forty, when, though we are sometimes for a moment forty times happier than younger women, we are sometimes fifty times more wretched.—Well, my child, and are you happy?' she ended by asking me, evidently glad to say no more about herself.

" 'You see me in a rapture of love and happiness,' I told her.

" 'Calyste is as kind and genuine as he is noble and handsome,' she said gravely. 'You are my heiress; you have, besides my fortune, the twofold ideal of which I dreamed.—I am glad of what I have done,' she added after a pause. 'Now, my child, do not be blinded. You have easily grasped happiness, you had only to put out your hand; now try to keep it. If you had come here merely to carry away the advice of my experience, your journey would be well rewarded. Calyste at this moment is fired by an infection of passion;

you did not inspire it. To make your happiness durable, dear child, strive to add this element to the former one. In your own interest and your husband's, try to be capricious, coy, a little severe if necessary. I do not advise a spirit of odious calculation, nor tyranny, but the science of conduct. Between usury and extravagance there is economy. Learn to acquire a certain decent control of your husband.

"'These are the last worldly words I shall ever speak; I have been waiting to say them to you, for my conscience quaked at the notion of having sacrificed you to save Calyste; attach him to you, give him children, let him respect you as their mother.—Finally,' she added in an agitated voice, 'manage that he shall never see Béatrix again!'

"This name was enough to produce a sort of torpor in us both; we remained looking into each other's eyes, exchanging our vague sentiments of uneasiness.

"'Are you going home to Guérande?' she asked.

"'Yes,' said I.

"'Well, never go to les Touches. I was wrong to give you the place.'

"'Why?'

"'Child, les Touches is for you a Bluebeard's cupboard, for there is nothing so dangerous as rousing a sleeping passion.'

"I have given you the substance of our conversation, my dear mother. If Mademoiselle des Touches made me talk, on the other hand she gave me much to think about—all the more because in the excitement of our travels, and my happiness with my Calyste, I had forgotten the serious matter of which I spoke in my first letter.

"After admiring Nantes, a delightful and splendid city; after going to see, in the Place de Bretagne, the spot where Charette so nobly fell, we arranged to return to Saint-Nazaire down the Loire, since we had already gone from Nantes to Guérande by the road. Public traveling is an invention of the modern monster the Monopole. Two rather pretty women belonging to Nantes were behaving rather noisily on deck,

suffering evidently from Kergarouëtism—a jest you will understand when I shall have told you what the Kergarouëts are. Calyste behaved very well. Like a true gentleman, he did not parade me as his wife. Though pleased by his good taste, like a child with his first drum, I thought this an admirable opportunity for practising the system recommended by Camille Maupin—for it was certainly not the novice that had spoken to me. I put on a little sulky face, and Calyste was very flatteringly distressed. In reply to his question, whispered in my ear, 'What is the matter?' I answered the truth:

" 'Nothing whatever.'

"And I could judge at once how little effect the truth has in the first instance. Falsehood is a decisive weapon in cases where rapidity is the only salvation for a woman or an empire. Calyste became very urgent, very anxious. I led him to the forepart of the boat, among a mass of ropes, and there, in a voice full of alarms, if not of tears, I told him all the woes and fears of a woman whose husband happens to be the handsomest of men.

" 'Oh, Calyste!' said I, 'there is one dreadful blot on our marriage. You did not love me! you did not choose me! You did not stand fixed like a statue when you saw me for the first time. My heart, my attachment, my tenderness cry out to you for affection, and some day you will punish me for having been the first to offer the treasure of my pure and involuntary girlish love! I ought to be grudging and capricious, but I have no strength for it against you.—If that odious woman who scorned you had been in my place now, you would not even have seen those two hideous provincial creatures who would be classed with cattle by the Paris *octroi*.'

"Calyste, my dear mother, had tears in his eyes and turned away to hide them; he saw la Basse Indre, and ran to desire the captain to put us on shore. No one can hold out against such a response, especially as it was followed by a stay of three hours in a little country inn, where we breakfasted off fresh fish, in a little room such as *genre* painters love, while

through the windows came the roar of the ironworks of Indret across the broad waters of the Loire. Seeing the happy result of the experiments of experience, I exclaimed, 'Oh, sweet Félicité!'

"Calyste, who of course knew nothing of the advice I had received, or of the artfulness of my behavior, fell into a delightful punning blunder by replying, 'Never let us forget it!—We will send an artist here to sketch the scene.'

"I laughed, dear mamma!—well, I laughed till Calyste was quite disconcerted and on the point of being angry.

"'Yes,' said I, 'but there is in my heart a picture of this landscape, of this scene, which nothing can ever efface, and inimitable in its color.'

"Indeed, mother, I find it impossible to give my love the appearance of warfare or hostility. Calyste can do what he likes with me. That tear is, I believe, the first he ever bestowed on me! is it not worth more than a second declaration of a wife's rights? A heartless woman, after the scene on the boat, would have been mistress of the situation; I lost all I had gained. By your system, the more I am a wife, the more I become a sort of prostitute, for I am a coward in happiness; I cannot hold out against a glance from my lord. I do not abandon myself to love; I hug it as a mother clasps her child to her breast for fear of some harm."

III

From the same to the same

"*July*, GUÉRANDE.

"Oh! my dear mother, to be jealous after three months of married life! My heart is indeed full. I feel the deepest hatred and the deepest love.—I am worse than deserted, I am not loved!—Happy am I to have a mother, another heart to which I may cry at my ease.

"To us wives who are still to some extent girls, it is quite enough to be told—'Here, among the keys of your palace, is

one all rusty with remembrance; go where you will, enjoy everything, but beware of visiting les Touches'—to make us rush in hot-foot, our eyes full of Eve's curiosity. What a provoking element Mademoiselle des Touches had infused into my love! And why was I forbidden les Touches? What! does such happiness as mine hang on an excursion, on a visit to an old house in Brittany? What have I to fear?—In short, add to Mrs. Bluebeard's reasons the craving that gnaws at every woman's heart to know whether her power is precarious or durable, and you will understand why one day I asked, with an air of indifference:

"'What sort of place is les Touches?'

"'Les Touches is your own,' said my adorable mother-in-law.

"'Ah! If only Calyste had never set his foot there!——' said Aunt Zéphirine, shaking her head.

"'He would not now be my husband,' said I.

"'Then you know what happened there?' said my mother-in-law sharply.

"'It is a place of perdition,' said Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël. 'Mademoiselle des Touches committed many sins there for which she now begs forgiveness of God.'

"'And has it not saved that noble creature's soul, besides making the fortune of the Convent?' cried the Chevalier du Halga. 'The Abbé Grimont tells me that she has given a hundred thousand francs to the Ladies of the Visitation.'

"'Would you like to go to les Touches?' said the Baroness. 'It is worth seeing.'

"'No, no!' cried I eagerly.

"Now, does not this little scene strike you as taken from some diabolical drama? And it was repeated under a hundred pretences. At last my mother-in-law said:

"'I understand why you should not wish to go to les Touches. You are quite right.'

"Confess, dear mamma, that such a stab, so unintentionally given, would have made you determine that you must know

whether your happiness really rested on so frail a basis that it must perish under one particular roof? I must do this justice to Calyste, he had never proposed to visit this retreat which is now his property. Certainly when we love, we become bereft of our senses, for his silence and reserve nettled me, till I said one day, 'What are you afraid of seeing at les Touches that you never mention it even?'

"'Let us go there,' said he.

"I was caught, as every woman is who wishes to be caught, and who trusts to chance to cut the Gordian knot of her hesitancy. So we went to les Touches.

"It is a delightful spot, most artistically tasteful, and I revel in the abyss whither Mademoiselle des Touches had warned me never to go. All poison-flowers are beautiful. The devil sows them—for there are flowers of Satan's and flowers from God! We have only to look into our own hearts to see that they went halves in the work of creation.—What bitter-sweet joys I found in this place where I played, not with fire but with ashes. I watched Calyste; I wanted to know if every spark was dead, and looked out for every chance draught of air, believe me! I noted his face as we went from room to room, from one piece of furniture to another, exactly like children seeking some hidden object. He seemed thoughtful; still, at first I fancied I had conquered. I felt brave enough to speak of Madame de Rochefide, who, since the adventure of her fall at le Croisic, is called Rocheperfide. Finally, we went to look at the famous box-shrub on which Béatrix was caught when Calyste pushed her into the sea that she might never belong to any man.

"'She must be very light to have rested there!' said I, laughing.

"Calyste said nothing. 'Peace to the dead,' I added.

"Still he was silent. 'Have I vexed you?' I asked.

"'No. But do not galvanize that passion,' he replied.

"What a speech!—Calyste, seeing it had saddened me, was doubly kind and tender to me.

"*August.*

"Alas! I was at the bottom of the pit and amusing myself, like the innocents in a melodrama, with plucking the flowers. Suddenly a horrible idea came galloping across my happiness like the horse in the German ballad. I fancied I could discern that Calyste's love was fed by his reminiscences, that he was wreaking on me the storms I could revive in him, by reminding him of that horrible coquette Béatrix.—That unwholesome, cold, limp, tenacious nature—akin to the mollusk and the coral insect—dares to be called Béatrix!

"So already, dear mother, I am forced to have an eye on a suspicion when my heart is wholly Calyste's, and is it not a terrible misfortune that the eye should get the better of the heart; that the suspicion, in short, has been justified?—And in this way:

" 'I love this place,' I said to Calyste one morning, 'for I owe my happiness to it—so I forgive you for sometimes mistaking me for another woman——'

"My loyal Breton colored, and I threw my arms round his neck; but I came away from les Touches, and shall never go back there.

"The depth of my hatred, which makes me long for the death of Madame de Rochefide—oh dear, a natural death, of course, from a cold or some accident—revealed to me the extent and vehemence of my love for Calyste. This woman has haunted my slumbers; I have seen her in my dreams.—Am I fated to meet her?—Yes, the novice in the Convent was right; les Touches is a fatal spot. Calyste renewed his impressions there, and they are stronger than the pleasures of our love.

"Find out, my dear mother, whether Madame de Rochefide is in Paris; for if so, I shall remain on our estates in Brittany. Poor Mademoiselle des Touches, who is now sorry that she dressed me like Béatrix on the day when our marriage contract was signed, to carry out her scheme—if she could now know how completely I am a substitute for our odious rival!

What would she say! Why, it is prostitution! I am no longer myself! I am put to shame.—I am suffering from a mad desire to flee from Guérande and the sands of le Croisic.

"*August* 25.

"I am quite resolved to return to the ruins of le Guénic. Calyste, uneasy at seeing me so uneasy, is taking me thither. Either he does not know much of the world, or he guesses nothing; or, if he knows the reason of my flight, he does not love me. I am so afraid of discovering the hideous certainty if I seek it, that, like the children, I cover my eyes with my hands not to hear the explosion. Oh, mother! I am not loved with such love as I feel in my own heart. Calyste, to be sure, is charming; but what man short of a monster would not be, like Calyste, amiable and gracious, when he is given all the opening blossoms of the soul of a girl of twenty, brought up by you, pure as I am, and loving, and—as many women have told you—very pretty——"

"LE GUENIC, *September 18th.*

"Has he forgotten her? This is the one thought which echoes like remorse in my soul. Dear mother, has every wife, like me, some such memory to contend with? Pure girls ought to marry none but innocent youths! And yet, that is an illusory Utopia; and it is better to have a rival in the past than in the future. Pity me, mamma, though at this moment I am happy; happy as a woman is who fears to lose her happiness and clings to it!—a way of killing it sometimes, says wise Clotilde.

"I perceive that for the last five months I have thought only of myself; that is, of Calyste. Tell my sister Clotilde that the dicta of her melancholy wisdom recur to me sometimes. She is happy in being faithful to the dead; she need fear no rival.

"A kiss to my dear Athénaïs; I see that Juste is madly in love with her. From what you say in your last letter, all he fears is that he may not win her. Cultivate that fear as a

precious flower. Athénaïs will be mistress; I, who dreaded lest I should not win Calyste from himself, shall be the handmaid. A thousand loves, dearest mother. Indeed, if my fears should not prove vain, I shall have paid very dear for Camille Maupin's fortune. Affectionate respects to my father."

These letters fully explain the secret attitude of this husband and wife. Where Sabine saw a love-match, Calyste saw a *mariage de convenance.* And the joys of the honeymoon had not altogether fulfilled the requirements of the law as to community of goods.

During their stay in Brittany the work of restoring, arranging, and decorating the Hôtel du Guénic in Paris had been carried on by the famous architect Grindot, under the eye of Clotilde and the Duchesse and Duc de Grandlieu. Every step was taken to enable the young couple to return to Paris in December 1838; and Sabine was glad to settle in the Rue de Bourbon, less for the pleasure of being mistress of the house than to discover what her family thought of her married life. Calyste, handsome and indifferent, readily allowed himself to be guided in matters of fashion by Clotilde and his mother-in-law, who were gratified by his docility. He filled the place in the world to which his name, his fortune, and his connection entitled him. His wife's success, regarded as she was as one of the most charming women of the year, the amusements of the best society, duties to be done, and the dissipations of a Paris season, somewhat recruited the happiness of the young couple by supplying excitement and interludes. The Duchess and Clotilde believed in Sabine's happiness, ascribing Calyste's cold manners to his English blood, and the young wife got over her gloomy notions; she heard herself envied by so many less happy wives, that she banished her terrors to the limbo of bad dreams. Finally, Sabine's prospect of motherhood was the crowning guarantee for the future of this neutral-tinted union, a good augury which women of experience rely on.

In October 1839 the young Baronne du Guénic had a son, and was so foolish as to nurse him herself, like almost every woman under similar circumstances. How can she help being wholly a mother when her child is the child of a husband so truly idolized? Thus by the end of the following summer Sabine was preparing to wean her first child.

In the course of a two years' residence in Paris, Calyste had entirely shed the innocence which had cast the light of its prestige on his first experience in the world of passion. Calyste, as the comrade of the young Duc de Maufrigneuse—like himself, lately married to an heiress, Bertha de Cinq-Cygne—of the Vicomte Savinien de Portenduère, of the Duc and Duchesse de Rhétoré, the Duc and Duchesse de Lenoncourt-Chaulieu, and all the company that met in his mother-in-law's drawing-room, learnt to see the differences that divide provincial from Paris life. Wealth has its dark hours, its tracts of idleness, for which Paris, better than any other capital, can provide amusement, diversion, and interest. Hence, under the influence of these young husbands, who would leave the noblest and most beautiful creatures for the delights of the cigar or of whist, for the sublime conversation at a club or the absorbing interests of the turf, many of the domestic virtues were undermined in the young Breton husband. The maternal instinct in a woman who cannot endure to bore her husband is always ready to support young married men in their dissipations. A woman is so proud of seeing the man she leaves perfectly free come back to her side.

One evening, in October this year, to escape the cries of a weaned child, Calyste—on whose brow Sabine could not bear to see a cloud—was advised by her to go to the Thèâtre des Variétés, where a new piece was being acted. The servant sent to secure a stall had taken one quite near to the stage-boxes. Between the first and second acts, Calyste, looking about him, saw in one of these boxes on the ground tier, not four yards away, Madame de Rochefide.

Béatrix in Paris! Béatrix in public! The two ideas

pierced Calyste's brain like two arrows. He could see her again after nearly three years!—Who can describe the commotion in the soul of this lover who, far from forgetting, had sometimes so completely identified Béatrix with his wife that Sabine had been conscious of it? Who can understand how this poem of a lost and misprized love, ever living in the heart of Sabine's husband, overshadowed the young wife's dutiful charms and ineffable tenderness? Béatrix became light, the day-star, excitement, life, the unknown; while Sabine was duty, darkness, the familiar! In that instant one was pleasure, the other satiety. It was a thunderbolt.

Sabine's husband in a loyal impulse felt a noble prompting to leave the house. As he went out from the stalls, the door of the box was open, and in spite of himself his feet carried him in. He found Béatrix between two very distinguished men, Canalis and Nathan—a politician and a literary celebrity. During nearly three years, since Calyste had last seen Madame de Rochefide, she had altered very much; but though the metamorphosis had changed the woman's nature, she seemed all the more poetical and attractive in Calyste's eyes. Up to the age of thirty, clothing is all a pretty Parisian demands of dress; but when she has crossed the threshold of the thirties, she looks to finery for armor, fascinations, and embellishment; she composes it to lend her graces; she finds a purpose in it, assumes a character, makes herself young again, studies the smallest accessories,—in short, abandons nature for art.

Madame de Rochefide had just gone through the changing scenes of the drama which, in this history of the manners of the French in the nineteenth century, is called "The Deserted Woman." Conti having thrown her over, she had naturally become a great artist in dress, in flirtation, and in artificial bloom of every description.

"How is it that Conti is not here," asked Calyste of Canalis in a whisper, after the commonplace greetings which begin the most momentous meeting when it takes place in public.

The erewhile poet of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, twice

minister, and now for the fourth time a speaker hoping for fresh promotion, laid his finger with meaning on his lips. This explained all.

"I am so glad to see you," said Béatrix, in a kittenish way. "I said to myself as soon as I saw you, before you saw me, that you, at any rate, would not disown me! Oh, my Calyste," she murmured in his ear, "why are you married?—and to such a little fool, too!"

As soon as a woman whispers to a newcomer in her box, and makes him sit down by her, men of breeding always find some excuse for leaving them together.

"Are you coming, Nathan?" said Canalis; "Madame la Marquise will excuse me if I go to speak a word to d'Arthez, whom I see with the Princesse de Cadignan. I must talk about a combination of speakers for to-morrow's sitting."

This retreat, effected with good taste, gave Calyste a chance of recovering from the shock he had sustained; but he lost all his remaining strength and presence of mind as he inhaled the, to him, intoxicating and poisonous fragrance of the poem called Béatrix.

Madame de Rochefide, who had grown bony and stringy, whose complexion was almost ruined, thin, faded, with dark circles round her eyes, had that evening wreathed the untimely ruin with the most ingenious devices of Parisian frippery. Like all deserted women, she had tried to give herself a virgin grace, and by the effect of various white draperies to recall the maidens of Ossian, with names ending in *a*, so poetically represented by Girodet. Her fair hair fell about her long face in bunches of curls, reflecting the flare of the footlights in the sheen of scented oil. Her pale forehead shone, she had applied an imperceptible touch of rouge over the dull whiteness of her sin, bathed in bran-water, and its brilliancy cheated the eye. A scarf, so fine that it was hard to believe that man could have woven it of silk, was wound about her neck so as to diminish its length by hiding it, and barely revealing the treasures enticingly displayed by her stays. The bodice was a masterpiece of art. As to her attitude, it is

enough to say that it was well worth the pains she had taken to elaborate it. Her arms, lean and hard, were scarcely visible through the carefully arranged puffs of her wide sleeves. She presented that mixture of false glitter and sheeny silk, of flowing gauze and frizzled hair, of liveliness, coolness, and movement which has been called *je ne sais quoi*. Every one knows what is meant by this *je ne sais quoi*. It is a compound of cleverness, taste, and temperament. Béatrix was, in fact, a drama, a *spectacle*, all scenery, and transformations, and marvelous machinery.

The performance of these fairy pieces, which are no less brilliant in dialogue, turns the head of a man blessed with honesty; for, by the law of contrast, he feels a frenzied desire to play with the artificial thing. It is false and seductive, elaborate, but pleasing, and there are men who adore these women who play at being charming as one plays a game of cards. This is the reason—man's desire is a syllogism, and argues from this external skill to the secret theorems of voluptuous enjoyment. The mind concludes, though not in words, "A woman who can make herself so attractive must have other resources of passion." And it is true. The women who are deserted are the women who love; the women who keep their lovers are those who know how to love. Now, though this lesson in Italian had been a hard one for Béatrix's vanity, her nature was too thoroughly artificial not to profit by it.

"It is not a matter of loving you men," she had been saying some minutes before Calyste went in; "we have to worry you when we have got you; that is the secret of keeping you. Dragons who guard treasures are armed with talons and wings!"

"Your idea might be put into a sonnet," Canalis was saying just as Calyste entered the box.

At one glance Béatrix read Calyste's condition; she saw, still fresh and raw, the marks of the collar she had put on him at les Touches. Calyste, offended by her phrase about his wife, hesitated between his dignity as a husband, defending Sabine, and finding a sharp word to cast on the heart

whence, for him, rose such fragrant reminiscences—a heart he believed to be yet bleeding. The Marquise discerned this hesitancy; she had spoken thus, solely to gauge the extent of her power over Calyste, and, seeing him so weak, she came to his assistance to get him out of his difficulty.

"Well, my friend," said she, when the two courtiers had left, "you see me alone—yes, alone in the world!"

"And you never thought of me?" said Calyste.

"You!" she replied; "are not you married?—It has been one of my great griefs among the many I have endured since we last met. 'Not merely have I lost love,' I said to myself, 'but friendship too, a friendship I believed to be wholly Breton.' We get used to anything. I now suffer less, but I am broken. This is the first time for a long while that I have unburdened my heart. Compelled to be reserved in the presence of indifferent persons, and as arrogant to those who court me as though I had never fallen, and having lost my dear Félicité, I have no ear into which to breathe the words, 'I am wretched!' And even now, can I tell you what my anguish was when I saw you a few yards away from me, not recognizing me; or what my joy is at seeing you close to me.—Yes," said she, at a movement on Calyste's part, "it is almost fidelity! In this you see what misfortune means! A nothing, a visit, is everything.

"Yes, you really loved me, as I deserved to be loved by the man who has chosen to trample on all the treasures I cast at his feet. And, alas! to my woe, I cannot forget; I love, and I mean to be true to the past, which can never return."

As she poured out this speech, a hundred times rehearsed, she used her eyes in such a way as to double the effect of words which seemed to surge up from her soul with the violence of a long-restrained torrent. Calyste, instead of speaking, let fall the tears that had been gathering in his eyes. Béatrix took his hand and pressed it, making him turn pale.

"Thank you, Calyste; thank you, my poor boy; that is the way a true friend should respond to a friend's sorrow. We

understand each other. There, do not add another word!—Go now; if we were seen, you might cause your wife grief if by chance any one told her that we had met—though innocently enough, in the face of a thousand people.—Good-bye, I am brave, you see—" And she wiped her eyes by what should be called in feminine rhetoric the antithesis of action.

"Leave me to laugh the laugh of the damned with the people I do not care for, but who amuse me," she went on. "I see artists and writers, the circle I knew at our poor Camille's—she was right, no doubt! Enrich the man you love, and then disappear, saying, 'I am too old for him!' It is to die a martyr. And that is best when one cannot die a virgin."

She laughed, as if to efface the melancholy impression she might have made on her adorer.

"But where can I call on you?" asked Calyste.

"I have hidden myself in the Rue de Courcelles, close to the Parc Monceaux, in a tiny house suited to my fortune, and I cram my brain with literature—but for my own satisfaction only, to amuse myself. Heaven preserve me from the mania of writing!—Go, leave me; I do not want to be talked about, and what will not people say if they see us together? And besides, Calyste, I tell you, if you stay a minute longer I shall cry, for I can't help it."

Calyste withdrew, after giving his hand to Béatrix, and feeling a second time the deep strange sensation of a pressure on both sides full of suggestive incitement.

"My God! Sabine never stirred my heart like this," was the thought that assailed him in the corridor.

Throughout the rest of the evening the Marquise de Rochefide did not look three times straight at Calyste; but she sent him side glances which rent the soul of the man who had given himself up wholly to his first and rejected love.

When the Baron du Guénic was at home again, the magnificence of his rooms reminded him of the sort of mediocrity to which Béatrix had alluded, and he felt a hatred for the fortune that did not belong to that fallen angel. On hearing that Sabine had been in bed some time, he was happy in having a night to himself to live in his emotions.

He now cursed the perspicacity given to Sabine by her affection. When it happens that a man is adored by his wife, she can read his face like a book, she knows the slightest quiver of his muscles, she divines the reason when he is calm, she questions herself when he is in the least sad, wondering if she is in fault, she watches his eyes; to her those eyes are colored by his ruling thought—they love or they love not. Calyste knew himself to be the object of a worship so complete, so artless, so jealous, that he doubted whether he could assume a countenance that would preserve the secret of the change that had come over him.

"What shall I do to-morrow morning?" said he to himself as he fell asleep, fearing Sabine's scrutiny.

For when they first met, or even in the course of the day, Sabine would ask him, "Do you love me as much as ever?" or, "I don't bore you?" Gracious questionings, varying according to the wife's wit or mood, and covering real or imaginary terrors.

A storm will stir up mud and bring it to the top of the noblest and purest hearts. And so, next morning, Calyste, who was genuinely fond of his child, felt a thrill of joy at hearing that Sabine was anxious as to the cause of some symptoms, and, fearing croup, could not leave the infant Calyste. The Baron excused himself on the score of business from breakfasting at home, and went out. He fled as a prisoner escapes, happy in the mere act of walking, in going across the Pont Louis XVI. and the Champs-Elysées to a café on the boulevard, where he breakfasted alone.

What is there in love? Does Nature turn restive under the social yoke? Does Nature insist that the spring of a devoted life shall be spontaneous and free, its flow that of a wild torrent tossed by the rocks of contradiction and caprice, instead of a tranquil stream trickling between two banks—the mairie on one side, and the church on the other? Has she schemes of her own when she is hatching those volcanic eruptions to which perhaps we owe our great men?

It would have been difficult to find a young man more piously brought up than Calyste, of purer life, or less tainted by infidelity; and he was rushing towards a woman quite unworthy of him, when a merciful and glorious chance brought to him, in Sabine, a girl of really aristocratic beauty, with a refined and delicate mind, pious, loving, and wholly attached to him; her angelic sweetness still touched with the pathos of love, passionate love in spite of marriage—such love as his for Béatrix.

The greatest men perhaps have still some clay in their composition; the mire still has charms. So, in spite of folly and frailty, the woman would then be the less imperfect creature. Madame de Rochefide in the midst of the crowd of artistic pretenders who surrounded her, and in spite of her fall, belonged to the highest nobility all the same; her nature was ethereal rather than earth-born, and she hid the courtesan she meant to be under the most aristocratic exterior. So this explanation cannot account for Calyste's strange passion.

The reason may perhaps be found in a vanity so deeply buried that moralists have not yet discerned that side of vice. There are men, truly noble as Calyste was, and as handsome, rich, elegant, and well bred, who weary—unconsciously perhaps—of wedded life with a nature like their own; beings whose loftiness is not amazed by loftiness, who are left cold by a dignity and refinement on a constant level with their own, but who crave to find in inferior or fallen natures a corroboration of their own superiority though they would not ask their praises. The contrast of moral degradation and magnanimity fascinates their sight. What is pure shines so vividly by the side of what is impure! This comparison is pleasing. Calyste found nothing in Sabine to protect; she was irreproachable; all the wasted energies of his heart went forth to Béatrix. And if we have seen great men playing the part of Jesus, raising up the woman taken in adultery, how should commonplace folks be any wiser?

Calyste lived till two o'clock on the thought, "I shall see her

again!"—a poem which ere now has proved sustaining during a journey of seven hundred leagues. Then he went with a light step to the Rue de Courcelles; he recognized the house though he had never seen it; and he, the Duc de Grandlieu's son-in-law, he, as rich, as noble as the Bourbons, stood at the foot of the stairs, stopped by the question from an old butler, "Your name, if you please, sir?"

Calyste understood that he must leave Madame de Rochefide free to act, and he looked out on the garden and the walls streaked with black and yellow lines left by the rain on the stucco of Paris.

Madame de Rochefide, like most fine ladies when they break their chain, had fled, leaving her fortune in her husband's hands, and she would not appeal for help to her tyrant. Conti and Mademoiselle des Touches had spared Béatrix all the cares of material life, and her mother from time to time sent her a sum of money. Now that she was alone, she was reduced to economy of a rather severe kind to a woman used to luxury. So she had taken herself to the top of the hill on which lies the Parc Monceaux, sheltering herself in a little old house of some departed magnate, facing the street, but with a charming little garden behind it, at a rent of not more than eighteen hundred francs. And still, with an old manservant, a maid and a cook from Alençon, who had clung to her in her reverses, her poverty would have seemed opulence to many an ambitious middle-class housewife.

Calyste went up a flight of well-whitened stone stairs, the landings gay with flowers. On the first floor the old butler showed Calyste into the rooms through a double door of red velvet paneled with red silk and gilt nails. The rooms he went through were also hung with red silk and velvet. Dark-toned carpets, hangings across the windows and doors, the whole interior was in contrast with the outside, which the owner was at no pains to keep up.

Calyste stood waiting for Béatrix in a drawing-room, quiet in style, where luxury affected simplicity. It was hung with bright crimson velvet set off by cording of dull yellow silk;

the carpet was a darker red, the windows looked like conservatories, they were so crowded with flowers, and there was so little daylight, that he could scarcely see two vases of fine old red porcelain, and between them a silver cup attributed to Benvenuto Cellini, and brought from Italy by Béatrix. The furniture of gilt wood upholstered with velvet, the handsome consoles, on one of which stood a curious clock, the table covered with a Persian cloth, all bore witness to past wealth, of which the remains were carefully arranged. On a small table Calyste saw some trinkets, and a book half read, in which the place was marked by a dagger—symbolical of criticism—its handle sparkling with jewels. On the walls ten water-color drawings, handsomely framed, all representing bedrooms in various houses where Béatrix had lived in the course of her wandering life, gave an idea of her supreme impertinence.

The rustle of a silk dress announced the unfortunate lady, who appeared in a studied toilet, which, if Calyste had been an older hand, would certainly have shown him that he was expected. The dress, made like a dressing-gown to show a triangle of the white throat, was of pearl-gray watered silk with open hanging sleeves, showing the arms covered with an under sleeve made with puffs divided by straps, and with lace ruffles. Her fine hair, loosely fastened with a comb, escaped from under a cap of lace and flowers.

"So soon," said she with a smile. "A lover would not have been so eager. So you have some secrets to tell me, I suppose?" And she seated herself on a sofa, signing to Calyste to take a place by her.

By some chance—not perhaps unintentional, for women have two kinds of memory, that of the angels and that of the devils—Béatrix carried about her the same perfume that she had used at les Touches when she had first met Calyste. The breath of this scent, the touch of that dress, the look of those eyes, which in the twilight seemed to focus and reflect light, all went to Calyste's brain. The unhappy fellow felt the same surge of violence as had already so nearly killed Béatrix; but now the Marquise was on the edge of a divan, not

of the ocean; she rose to ring the bell, putting her finger to her lips. At this Calyste, called to order, controlled himself; he understood that Béatrix had no hostile intentions.

"Antoine, I am not at home," she said to the old servant. "Put some wood on the fire.—You see, Calyste, I treat you as a friend," she added with dignity when the old man was gone. "Do not treat me as your mistress.—I have two remarks to make. First, that I should not make any foolish stipulations with a man I loved; next, that I will never belong again to any man in the world. For I believed myself loved, Calyste, by a sort of Rizzio whom no pledges could bind, a man absolutely free, and you see whither that fatal infatuation has brought me.—As for you, you are tied to the most sacred duties; you have a young, amiable, delightful wife; and you are a father. I should be as inexcusable as you are, and we should both be mad——"

"My dear Béatrix, all your logic falls before one word. I have never loved any one on earth but you, and I married in spite of myself."

"A little trick played us by Mademoiselle des Touches," said she with a smile.

For three hours Madame de Rochefide kept Calyste faithful to his conjugal duties by pressing on him the horrible ultimatum of a complete breach with Sabine. Nothing less, she declared, could reassure her in the dreadful position in which she would be placed by Calyste's passion. And, indeed, she thought little of sacrificing Sabine; she knew her so well.

"Why, my dear boy, she is a woman who fulfils all the promise of her girlhood. She is a thorough Grandlieu, as brown as her Portuguese mother, not to say orange-colored, and as dry as her father. To speak the truth, your wife will never be lost to you; she is just a great boy, and can walk alone. Poor Calyste! is this the wife to suit you? She has fine eyes, but such eyes are common in Italy, Spain, and Portugal. Can a woman so lean be really tender? Eve was fair; dark women are descended from Adam, fair women from God, whose hand left a last touch on Eve when all creation was complete."

At about six o'clock Calyste in desperation took up his hat to go.

"Yes, go, my poor friend; do not let her have the disappointment of dining without you."

Calyste stayed. He was so young, so easy to take on the wrong side.

"You would really dare to dine with me?" said Béatrix, affecting the most provoking surprise. "My humble fare does not frighten you away, and you have enough independence of spirit to crown my joy by this little proof of affection?"

"Only let me write a line to Sabine," said he, "for she would wait for me till nine o'clock."

"There is my writing table," said Béatrix.

She herself lighted the candles, and brought one to the table to see what Calyste would write.

"My dear Sabine."

"My DEAR! Is your wife still dear to you?" said she, looking at him so coldly that it froze the marrow in his bones. "Go, then, go to dine with her."

"I am dining at an eating-house with some friends——"

"That is a lie. For shame! You are unworthy of her love or mine. All men are cowards with us. That will do, monsieur; go and dine with your dear Sabine!"

Calyste threw himself back in his armchair and turned paler than death. Bretons have a sort of obstinate courage which makes them hold their own under difficulties. The young Baron sat up again with his elbow firmly set on the table, his chin in his hand, and his sparkling eyes fixed on Béatrix, who was relentless. He looked so fine that a true northern or southern woman would have fallen on her knees, saying, "Take me!" But in Béatrix, born on the border between Normandy and Brittany, of the race of Casteran, desertion had brought out the ferocity of the Frank and the malignity of the Norman; she craved a tremendous and terrible revenge; she did not yield to his noble impulse.

"Dictate what I am to write, and I will obey," said the poor boy. "But then——"

"Then, yes," she replied, "for you will love me then as you loved me at Guérande.—Write, 'I am dining in town; do not wait.'"

"And——?" said Calyste, expecting something more.

"Nothing.—Sign it. Good," she said, seizing this note with covert joy. "I will send it by a messenger."

"Now!" cried Calyste, starting up like a happy man.

"I have preserved my liberty of action, I believe," said she, looking round, and pausing half-way between the table and the fireplace, where she was about to ring.

"Here, Antoine, have this note taken to the address.—Monsieur will dine with me."

Calyste went home about two in the morning.

After sitting up till half-past twelve, Sabine had gone to bed tired out. She slept, though she had been cruelly startled by the brevity of her husband's note; still, she accounted for it. True love in a woman can always explain everything to the advantage of the man she loves.

"Calyste was in a hurry!" thought she.

Next day the child had recovered, the mother's alarms were past. Sabine came in smiling, with little Calyste in her arms to show him to his father just before breakfast, full of the pretty nonsense, and saying the silly things that all young mothers are full of. This little domestic scene enabled Calyste to put a good face on matters, and he was charming to his wife while feeling that he was a wretch. He played like a boy himself with Monsieur le Chevalier; indeed, he overdid it, overacting his part; but Sabine had not reached that pitch of distrust in which a wife notes so subtle a shade.

At last, during breakfast, Sabine asked:

"And what were you doing yesterday?"

"Portenduère," said he, "kept me to dinner, and we went to the club to play a few rubbers of whist."

"It is a foolish life, my Calyste," replied Sabine. "The young men of our day ought rather to think of recovering all the estates in the country that their fathers lost. They cannot live by smoking cigars, playing whist, and dissipating their

idleness by being content with making impertinent speeches to the parvenus who are ousting them from all their dignities, by cutting themselves off from the masses, whose soul and brain they ought to be, and to whom they should appear as Providence. Instead of being a party, you will only be an opinion, as de Marsay said. Oh! if you could only know how my views have expanded since I have rocked and suckled your child. I want to see the old name of du Guénic figure in history."

Then, suddenly looking straight into Calyste's eyes, which were pensively fixed on her, she said:

"You must admit that the first note you ever wrote me was a little abrupt?"

"I never thought of writing till I reached the club."

"But you wrote on a woman's paper; it had some womanly scent."

"The club managers do such queer things——"

The Vicomte de Portenduère and his wife, a charming young couple, had become so intimate with the du Guénics that they shared a box at the Italian opera. The two young women, Sabine and Ursule, had been drawn into this friendship by a delightful exchange of advice, anxieties, and confidences about their babies. While Calyste, a novice in falsehood, was thinking to himself, "I must go to warn Savinien," Sabine was reflecting, "I fancied that the paper was stamped with a coronet!"

The suspicion flashed like lightning through her consciousness, and she blamed herself for it; but she made up her mind to look for the note, which, in the midst of her alarms on the previous day, she had tossed into her letter-box.

After breakfast Calyste went out, telling his wife he should soon return; he got into one of the little low one-horse carriages which were just beginning to take the place of the inconvenient cabriolet of our grandfathers. In a few minutes he reached the Rue des Saints-Pères, where the Vicomte lived, and begged him to do him the little kindness of lying in

case Sabine should question the Vicomtesse—he would do as much for him next time. Then, when once out of the house, Calyste, having first bidden the coachman to hurry as much as possible, went in a few minutes from the Rue des Saints-Pères to the Rue de Courcelles. He was anxious to know how Béatrix had spent the rest of the night.

He found the happy victim of fate just out of her bath, fresh, beautified, and breakfasting with a good appetite. He admired the grace with which his angel ate boiled eggs, and was delighted with the service of gold, a present from a music-mad lord for whom Conti had written some songs, on *ideas* supplied by his lordship, who had published them as his own. Calyste listened to a few piquant anecdotes related by his idol, whose chief aim was to amuse him, though she got angry and cried when he left her. He fancied he had been with her half an hour, and did not get home till three o'clock. His horse, a fine beast given him by the Vicomtesse de Grandlieu, looked as if it had come out of the river, it was so streaming with sweat.

By such a chance as a jealous woman always plans, Sabine was on guard at a window looking out into the courtyard, out of patience at Calyste's late return, and uneasy without knowing why. She was struck by the condition of the horse, its mouth full of foam.

"Where has he been?"

The question was whispered in her ear by that power which is not conscience—not the devil, nor an angel—the power which sees, feels, knows, and shows us the unknown; which makes us believe in the existence of spiritual beings, creatures of our own brain, going and coming, and living in the invisible spheres of ideas.

"Where have you come from, my darling?" said she, going down to the first landing to meet Calyste. "Abdel-Kader is half dead; you said you would be out but a few minutes, and I have been expecting you these three hours . . ."

"Well, well," said Calyste to himself, improving in the art of dissimulation, "I must get out of the scrape by a

present.—Dear little nurse," he said, putting his arm round his wife's waist with a more coaxing pressure than he would have given it if he had not felt guilty, "it is impossible, I see, to keep a secret, however innocent, from a loving wife . . ."

"We don't tell secrets on the stairs," she replied, laughing. "Come along!"

In the middle of the drawing-room that led to the bedroom, she saw, reflected in a mirror, Calyste's face, in which, not knowing that it could be seen, his fatigue and his real feeling showed; he had ceased to smile.

"That secret?" said she, turning round.

"You have been such a heroic nurse that the heir-presumptive of the du Guénics is dearer to me than ever; I wanted to surprise you—just like a worthy citizen of the Rue Saint-Denis. A dressing-table is being fitted for you which is a work of art—my mother and Aunt Zéphirine have helped—"

Sabine threw her arms around Calyste, and held him clasped to her heart, her head on his neck, trembling with the weight of happiness, not on account of the dressing-table, but because her suspicions were blown to the winds. It was one of those glorious gushes of joy which can be counted in a lifetime, and of which even the most excessive love cannot be prodigal, for life would be too quickly burnt out. Men ought, in such moments, to kneel at the woman's feet in adoration, for the impulse is sublime; all the powers of the heart and intellect overflow as water gushes from the urn of fountain-nymphs. Sabine melted into tears.

Suddenly, as if stung by a viper, she pushed Calyste from her, dropped on to a divan, and fainted away; the sudden chill on her glowing heart had almost killed her. As she held Calyste, her nose in his necktie, given up to happiness, she had smelt the same perfume as that on the notepaper!—Another woman's head had lain there, her face and hair had left the very scent of adultery. She had just kissed the spot where her rival's kisses were still warm.

"What is the matter?" said Calyste, after bringing Sabine

back to her senses by bathing her face with a wet handkerchief.

"Go and fetch the doctor, and the accoucheur—both. Yes, I feel the milk has turned to fever. . . . They will not come at once unless you go yourself——" *Vous,* she said, not *tu,* and the *vous* startled Calyste, who flew off in alarm. As soon as Sabine heard the outer gate shut, she sprang to her feet like a frightened deer, and walked round and round the room like a crazy thing, exclaiming, "My God! my God! my God!"

The two words took the place of thought. The crisis she had used as a pretext really came on. The hair on her head felt like so many eels, made red hot in the fire of nervous torment. Her heated blood seemed to her to have mingled with her nerves, and to be bursting from every pore. For a moment she was blind. "I am dying!" she shrieked.

At this fearful cry of an insulted wife and mother, her maid came in; and when she had been carried to her bed and had recovered her sight and senses, her first gleam of intelligence made her send the woman to fetch her friend Madame de Portenduère. Sabine felt her thoughts swirling in her brain like straws in a whirlwind.

"I saw myriads of them at once," she said afterwards.

Then she rang for the manservant, and in the transport of fever found strength enough to write the following note, for she was possessed by a mania, she must be sure of the truth:—

To Madame la Baronne du Guénic.

"Dear Mamma,—When you come to Paris, as you have led us to hope you may, I will thank you in person for the beautiful present by which you and Aunt Zéphirine and Calyste propose to thank me for having done my duty. I have been amply paid by my own happiness.—I cannot attempt to express my pleasure in this beautiful dressing-table, when you are here I will try to tell you. Believe me, when I dress before this glass, I shall always think, like the Roman lady, that my choicest jewel is our darling angel," and so on.

She had this letter posted by her own maid.

When the Vicomtesse de Portenduère came in, the shivering fit of a violent fever had succeeded the first paroxysm of madness.

"Ursule, I believe I am going to die," said she.

"What ails you, my dear?"

"Tell me, what did Calyste and Savinien do yesterday evening after dinner at your house?"

"What dinner?" replied Ursule, to whom her husband had as yet said nothing, not expecting an immediate inquiry. "Savinien and I dined alone last evening, and went to the Opera without Calyste."

"Ursule, dear child, in the name of your love for Savinien, I adjure you, keep the secret of what I have asked you, and what I will tell you. You alone will know what I am dying of—I am betrayed, at the end of three years—when I am not yet three-and-twenty——"

Her teeth chattered, her eyes were lifeless and dull; her face had the greenish hue and surface of old Venetian glass.

"You—so handsome!—But for whom!"

"I do not know. But Calyste has lied to me—twice. Not a word! Do not pity me, do not be indignant, affect ignorance; you will hear *who,* perhaps, through Savinien.—Oh! yesterday's note——"

And shivering in her shift, she flew to a little cabinet and took out the letter.

"A Marquise's coronet!" she said, getting into bed again. "Find out whether Madame de Rochefide is in Paris. Have I a heart left to weep or groan?—Oh, my dear, to see my beliefs, my poem, my idol, my virtue, my happiness, all, all destroyed, crushed, lost!—There is no God in Heaven now, no love on earth, no more life in my heart—nothing!—I do not feel sure of the daylight, I doubt if there is a sun.—In short, my heart is suffering so cruelly, that I hardly feel the horrible pain in my breast and my face. Happily the child is weaned. My milk would have poisoned him!" And at this thought, a torrent of tears relieved her eyes, hitherto dry.

Pretty Madame de Portenduère, holding the fatal note which Sabine had smelt at for certainty, stood speechless at this desperate woe, amazed by this death of love, and unable to say anything in spite of the incoherent fragments in which Sabine strove to tell her all. Suddenly Ursule was enlightened by one of those flashes which come only to sincere souls.

"I must save her!" thought she. "Wait till I return, Sabine," cried she. "I will know the truth."

"Oh, and I shall love you in my grave!" cried Sabine.

Madame de Portenduère went to the Duchess de Grandlieu, insisted on absolute secrecy, and informed her as to the state Sabine was in.

"Madame," said she, in conclusion, "are you not of opinion that, to save her from some dreadful illness, or perhaps even madness—who can tell?—we ought to tell the doctor everything, and invent some fables about that abominable Calyste, so as to make him seem innocent, at any rate, for the present."

"My dear child," said the Duchess, who had felt a chill at this revelation, "friendship has lent you for the nonce the experience of a woman of my age. I know how Sabine worships her husband; you are right, she may go mad."

"And she might lose her beauty, which would be worse," said the Vicomtesse.

"Let us go at once!" cried the Duchess.

They, happily, were a few minutes in advance of the famous accoucheur Dommanget, the only one of the two doctors whom Calyste had succeeded in finding.

"Ursule has told me all," said the Duchess to her daughter. "You are mistaken. In the first place, Béatrix is not in Paris. As to what your husband was doing yesterday, my darling, he lost a great deal of money, and does not know where to find enough to pay for your dressing-table—"

"And this?" interrupted Sabine, holding out the note.

"This!" said the Duchess, laughing, "is Jockey Club paper. Every one writes on coroneted paper—the grocers will have titles soon——"

The prudent mother tossed the ill-starred document into the fire.

When Calyste and Dommanget arrived, the Duchess, who had given her orders, was informed; she left Sabine with Madame de Portenduère, and met the doctor and Calyste in the drawing-room.

"Sabine's life is in danger, monsieur," said she to Calyste. "You have been false to her with Madame de Rochefide"—Calyste blushed like a still decent girl caught tripping—"and as you do not know how to deceive," the Duchess went on, "you were so clumsy that Sabine's guessed everything. You do not wish my daughter's death, I suppose?—All this, Monsieur Dommanget, gives you a clew to my daughter's illness and its cause.—As for you, Calyste, an old woman like me can understand your error, but I do not forgive you. Such forgiveness can only be purchased by a life of happiness. If you desire my esteen, first save my child's life. Then forget Madame de Rochefide—she is good for nothing after the first time!—Learn to lie, have the courage and impudence of a criminal. I have lied, God knows! I, who shall be compelled to do cruel penance for such mortal sin."

She explained to him the fictions she had just invented. The skilful doctor, sitting by the bed, was studying the patient's symptoms, and the means of staving off the mischief. While he was prescribing measures, of which the success must depend on their immediate execution; Calyste, at the foot of the bed, kept his eyes fixed on Sabine, trying to give them an expression of tender anxiety.

"Then it is gambling that has given you those dark marks round your eyes?" she said in a feeble voice.

The words startled the doctor, the mother, and Ursule, who looked at each other; Calyste turned as red as a cherry.

"That comes of suckling your child," said Dommanget cleverly but roughly. "Then husbands are dull, being so much separated from their wives, they go to the club and play high. But do not lament over the thirty thousand francs that Monsieur le Baron lost last night——"

"Thirty thousand francs!" said Ursule like a simpleton.

"Yes, I know it for certain," replied Dommanget. "I heard this morning at the house of the Duchesse Berthe de Maufrigneuse that you lost the money to Monsieur de Trailles," he added to Calyste. "How can you play with such a man? Honestly, Monsieur le Baron, I understand your being ashamed of yourself."

Calyste, a kind and generous soul, when he saw his mother-in-law—the pious Duchess, the young Viscountess—a happy wife, and a selfish old doctor all lying like curiosity dealers, understood the greatness of the danger; he shed two large tears, which deceived Sabine.

"Monsieur," said she, sitting up in bed, and looking wrathfully at Dommanget, "Monsieur du Guénic may lose thirty, fifty, a hundred thousand francs if he chooses without giving any one a right to find fault with him or lecture him. It is better that Monsieur de Trailles should have won the money from him than that we, *we,* should have won from Monsieur de Trailles!"

Calyste rose and put his arm round his wife's neck. Kissing her on both cheeks, he said in her ear, "Sabine, you are an angel!"

Two days later the young Baroness was considered out of danger. On the following day Calyste went to Madame de Rochefide, and making a virtue of his infamy—

"Béatrix," said he, "you owe me much happiness. I sacrificed my poor wife to you, and she discovered everything. The fatal notepaper on which you made me write, with your initial and coronet on it, which I did not happen to see—I saw nothing but you! The letter B, happily, was worn away; but the scent you left clinging to me, the lies in which I entangled myself like a fool, have ruined my happiness. Sabine has been at death's door; the milk went to her brain, she has erysipelas, and will perhaps be disfigured for life. . . ."

Béatrix, while listening to this harangue, had a face of

Arctic coldness, enough to freeze the Seine if she had looked at it.

"Well, so much the better; it may bleach her a little, perhaps." And Béatrix, as dry as her own bones, as variable as her complexion, as sharp as her voice, went on in this tone, a tirade of cruel epigrams.

There can be no greater blunder than for a husband to talk to his mistress of his wife, if she is virtuous, unless it be to talk to his wife of his mistress if she is handsome. But Calyste had not yet had the sort of Parisian education which may be called the good manners of the passions. He could neither tell his wife a lie nor tell his mistress the truth—an indispensable training to enable a man to manage women. So he was obliged to appeal to all the powers of passion for two long hours, to wring from Béatrix the forgiveness he begged, denied him by an angel who raised her eyes to heaven not to see the culprit, and who uttered the reasons peculiar to Marquises in a voice choked with well-feigned tears, that she furtively wiped away with the lace edge of her handkerchief.

"You can talk to me of your wife the very day after I have yielded!—Why not say at once that she is a pearl of virtue? I know, she admires your beauty! That is what I call depravity! I—I love your soul! For I assure you, my dear boy, you are hideous compared with some shepherds of the Roman Campagna——," etc., etc.

This tone may seem strange, but it was a part of a system deliberately planned by Béatrix. In her third incarnation—for a woman completely changes with each fresh passion—she is far advanced in fraud—that is the only word that can describe the result of the experience gained in such adventures. The Marquise de Rochefide had sat in judgment on herself in front of her mirror. Clever women have no delusions about themselves; they count their wrinkles; they watch the beginnings of crows'-feet; they note the appearance of every speck in their skin; they know themselves by heart, and show it too plainly by the immense pains they take to preserve their beauty. And

so, to contend against a beautiful young wife, to triumph over her six days a week, Béatrix sought to win by the weapons of the courtesan. Without confessing to herself the baseness of her conduct, and carried away to use such means by a Turk-like passion for the handsome young man, she resolved to make him believe that he was clumsy, ugly, ill made, and to behave as if she hated him.

There is no more successful method with men of a domineering nature. To them the conquest of such disdain is the triumph of the first day renewed on every morrow. It is more; it is flattery hidden under the mask of aversion, and owing to it the charm and truth which underlie all the metamorphoses invented by the great nameless poets. Does not a man then say to himself, "I am irresistible!" or "I must love her well, since I conquer her repugnance!" If you deny this principle, which flirts and courtesans of every social grade discovered long ago, you must discredit the pursuers of science, the inquirers into secrets, who have long been repulsed in their duel with hidden causes.

Béatrix seconded her use of contempt as a moral incitement by a constant comparison between her comfortable poetic home and the Hôtel du Guénic. Every deserted wife neglects her home out of deep discouragement. Foreseeing this, Madame de Rochefide began covert innuendoes as to the luxury of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, which she stigmatized as absurd. The reconciliation scene, when Béatrix made Calyste swear to hate the wife who, as she said, was playing the farce of spilt milk, took place in a perfect bower, where she put herself into attitudes in the midst of beautiful flowers and jardinières of lavish costliness. She carried the art of trifles, of fashionable toys, to an extreme. Béatrix, sunk into contempt since Conti's desertion, was bent on gaining such fame as may be had by sheer perversity. The woes of a young wife, a Grandlieu, rich and lovely, were to build her a pedestal.

When a woman reappears in society after nursing her first child, she comes out again improved in charm and beauty.

If this phase of maternity can rejuvenate even women no longer in their first youth, it gives young wives a splendid freshness, a cheerful activity, a *brio* of life—if we may apply to the body a word which the Italians have invented for the mind. But while trying to resume the pleasant habits of the honeymoon, Sabine did not find the same Calyste. The unhappy girl watched him instead of abandoning herself to happiness. She expected the fatal perfume, and she smelt it; and she no longer confided in Ursule, nor in her mother, who had so charitably deceived her. She wanted certainty, and she had not long to wait for it. Certainty is never coy; it is like the sun, we soon need to pull down the blinds before it. In love it is a repetition of the fable of the Woodman calling on Death. We wish that certainty would blind us.

One morning, a fortnight after the first catastrophe, Sabine received this dreadful letter:—

To Madame la Baronne du Guénic.

"GUERANDE.

"MY DEAR DAUGHTER,—My sister Zéphirine and I are lost in conjectures as to the dressing-table mentioned in your letter; I am writing about it to Calyste, and beg your forgiveness for my ignorance. You cannot doubt our affection. We are saving treasure for you. Thanks to Mademoiselle de Pen-Hoël's advice as to the management of your land, you will in a few years find yourself possessed of a considerable capital without having to diminish your expenditure.

"Your letter, dearest daughter—whom I love as much as if I had borne you and fed you at my own breast—surprised me by its brevity, and especially by your making no mention of my dear little Calyste; you had nothing to tell me about the elder Calyste; he, I know, is happy," etc.

Sabine wrote across this letter, *"Brittany is too noble to lie with one accord!"* and laid it on Calyste's writing-table. He found it and read it. After recognizing Sabine's writing in the line across it, he threw it into the fire, determined never

to have seen it. Sabine spent a whole week in misery, of which the secret may be understood by those celestial or hermit souls that have never been touched by the wing of the fallen angel. Calyste's silence terrified Sabine.

"I, who ought to be all sweetness, all joy to him—I have vexed him, hurt him! My virtue is become hateful; I have perhaps humiliated my idol," said she to herself.

These thoughts ploughed furrows in her soul. She thought of asking forgiveness for this fault, but certainty brought her fresh proofs.

Béatrix, insolently bold, wrote to Calyste one day at his own house. The letter was put into Madame du Guénic's hands; she gave it to her husband unopened, but she said, with death in her soul, and in a broken voice:

"My dear, this note is from the Jockey Club; I know the scent and the paper."

Calyste blushed and put the letter in his pocket.

"Why do you not read it?"

"I know what they want."

The young wife sat down. She did not get an attack of fever, she did not cry, but she felt one of those surges of rage which in such feeble creatures bring forth monsters of crime, which arm them with arsenic for themselves or for their rivals. Little Calyste was presently brought to her, and she took him on her lap; the child, but just weaned, turned to find the breast under her dress.

"He remembers!" said she in a whisper.

Calyste went to his room to read the letter. When he was gone the poor young creature burst into tears, such tears as women shed when they are alone. Pain, like pleasure, has its initiatory stage; the first anguish, like that of which Sabine had so nearly died, can never recur, any more than a first experience of any kind. It is the first wedge of the torture of the heart; the others are expected, the wringing of the nerves is a known thing, the capital of strength has accumulated a deposit for firm resistance. And Sabine, sure now of the worst, sat by the fire for three hours with her boy on her knee,

and was quite startled when Gasselin, now their house-servant, came to announce that dinner was on the table.

"Let Monsieur know."

"Monsieur is not dining at home, Madame la Baronne."

Who can tell all the misery for a young woman of three-and-twenty, the torture of finding herself alone in the midst of a vast dining-room, in an ancient house, served by silent men, and in such circumstances?

"Order the carriage," she said suddenly; "I am going to the Opera."

She dressed splendidly; she meant to show herself alone, and smiling like a happy woman. In the midst of her remorse for the endorsement on that letter she was determined to triumph, to bring Calyste back to her by the greatest gentleness, by wifely virtues, by the meekness of a Paschal lamb. She would lie to all Paris. She loved him, she loved him as courtesans love, or angels, with pride and with humility.

But the Opera was *Othello*. When Rubini sang *Il mio cor si divide,* she fled. Music is often more powerful than the poet and the actor, the two most formidable natures combined. Savinien de Portenduère accompanied Sabine to the portico and put her into her carriage, unable to account for her precipitate escape.

Madame du Guénic now entered on a period of sufferings such as only the highest classes can know. You who are poor, envious, wretched, when you see on ladies' arms those snakes with diamond heads, those necklaces and pins, tell yourselves that those vipers sting, that those necklaces have poisoned teeth, that those light bonds cut into the tender flesh to the very quick. All this luxury must be paid for. In Sabine's position women can curse the pleasures of wealth; they cease to see the gilding of their rooms, the silk of sofas is as tow, exotic flowers as nettles, perfumes stink, miracles of cookery scrape the throat like barley-bread, and life has the bitterness of the Dead Sea.

Two or three instances will so plainly show the reaction of

a room or of a woman on happiness, that every one who has experienced it will be reminded of their home-life.

Sabine, warned of the dreadful truth, studied her husband when he was going out, to guess at the day's prospects. With what a surge of suppressed fury does a woman fling herself on to the red-hot pikes of such torture!—What joy for Sabine when he did not go to the Rue de Courcelles! When he came in she would look at his brow, his hair, his eyes, his expression and attitude, with a horrible interest in trifles, and the studious observation of the most recondite details of his dress, by which a woman loses her self-respect and dignity. These sinister investigations, buried in her heart, turned sour there and corroded the slender roots, whence grow the blue flowers of holy confidence, the golden stars of saintly love, all the blossoms of memory.

One day Calyste looked round at everything with ill-humor, but he stayed at home! Sabine was coaxing and humble, cheerful and amusing.

"You are cross with me, Calyste; am I not a good wife?—What is there here that you do not like?"

"All the rooms are so cold and bare," said he. "You do not understand this kind of thing."

"What is wanting?"

"Flowers——"

"Very good," said Sabine to herself; "Madame de Rochefide is fond of flowers, it would seem."

Two days later the rooms at the Hôtel du Guénic were completely altered. No house in Paris could pride itself on finer flowers than those that decorated it.

Some time after this Calyste, one evening after dinner, complained of the cold. He shivered in his chair, looking about him to see whence the draught came, and evidently seeking something close about him. It was some time before Sabine could guess the meaning of this new whim, for the house was fitted with a hot-air furnace to warm the staircase, anterooms, and passages. Finally, after three days' meditation, it struck her that her rival had a screen, no doubt, so as to

produce the subdued light that was favorable to the deterioration of her face; so Sabine purchased a screen made of glass, and of Jewish magnificence.

"Which way will the wind blow now?" she wondered.

This was not the end of the mistress' indirect criticism. Calyste ate so little at home as to drive Sabine crazy; he sent away his plate after nibbling two or three mouthfuls.

"Is it not nice?" asked Sabine, in despair, seeing all the pains wasted which she devoted to her conferences with the cook.

"I did not say so, my darling," replied Calyste, without annoyance. "I am not hungry, that is all."

A wife given up to a legitimate passion and to such a contest as this, feels a sort of fury in her desire to triumph over her rival, and often outruns the mark even in the most secret regions of married life. This cruel struggle, fierce and ceaseless, over the visible and outward facts of home-life, was carried on with equal frenzy over the feelings of the heart. Sabine studied her attitudes and dress, and watched herself in the smallest trivialities of love.

This matter of the cookery went on for nearly a month. Sabine, with the help of Mariotte and Gasselin, invented stage tricks to discover what dishes Madame de Rochefide served up for Calyste. Gasselin took the place of the coachman, who fell ill to order, and was thus enabled to make friends with Béatrix's cook; so at last Sabine could give Calyste the same fare, only better; but again she saw him give himself airs over it.

"What is wanting?" said she.

"Nothing," he answered, looking round the table for something that was not there.

"Ah!" cried Sabine to herself, as she woke next morning, "Calyste is pining for powdered cockroaches* and all the English condiments which are sold by the druggist in cruets; Madame de Rochefide has accustomed him to all sorts of spices."

*Balzac has *hannetons*, cockchafers. It was an old joke that Soy was made of cockroaches.—*Translator.*

She bought an English cruet-stand and its scorching contents; but she could not pursue her discoveries down to every dainty devised by her rival.

This phase lasted for several months; nor need we wonder when we remember all the attractions of such a contest. It is life; with all its wounds and pangs it is preferable to the blank gloom of disgust, to the poison of contempt, to the blankness of abdication, to the death of the heart that we call indifference. Still, all Sabine's courage oozed out one evening when she appeared dressed, as women only dress by a sort of inspiration, in the hope of winning the victory over another, and when Calyste said with a laugh:

"Do what you will, Sabine, you will never be anything but a lovely Andalusian!"

"Alas!" said she, sinking onto her sofa, "I can never be fair. But if this goes on, I know that I shall soon be five-and-thirty."

She refused to go to the Italian opera; she meant to stay in her room all the evening. When she was alone she tore the flowers from her hair and stamped upon them, she undressed, trampled her gown, her sash, all her finery under foot, exactly like a goat caught in a loop of its tether, which never ceases struggling till death. Then she went to bed. The maid presently came in. Imagine her surprise!

"It is nothing," said Sabine. "It is Monsieur."

Unhappy wives know this superb vanity, these falsehoods, where, of two kinds of shame both in arms, the more womanly wins the day.

Sabine was growing thin under these terrible agitations, grief ate into her soul; but she never forgot the part she had forced on herself. A sort of fever kept her up, her life sent back to her throat the bitter words suggested to her by grief; she sheathed the lightnings of her fine black eyes, and made them soft, even humble.

Her fading health was soon perceptible. The Duchess, an admirable mother, though her piety had become more and

more Portuguese, thought there was some mortal disease in the really sickly condition which Sabine evidently encouraged. She knew of the acknowledged intimacy of Calyste and Béatrix. She took care to have her daughter with her to try to heal her wounded feelings, and, above all, to save her from her daily martyrdom; but Sabine for a long time remained persistently silent as to her woes, fearing some intervention between herself and Calyste. She declared she was happy! Having exhausted sorrow, she fell back on her pride, on all her virtues.

At the end of the month, however, of being petted by her sister Clotilde and her mother, she confessed her griefs, told them all her sufferings, and cursed life, saying that she looked forward to death with delirious joy. She desired Clotilde, who meant never to marry, to be a mother to little Calyste, the loveliest child any royal race need wish for as its heir-presumptive.

One evening, sitting with her youngest sister Athénaïs—who was to be married to the Vicomte de Grandlieu after Lent—with Clotilde, and the Duchess, Sabine uttered the last cry of her anguish of heart, wrung from her by the extremity of her last humiliation.

"Athénaïs," said she, when at about eleven o'clock the young Vicomte Juste de Grandlieu took his leave, "you are going to be married, profit by my example! Keep your best qualities to yourself, as if they were a crime, resist the temptation to display them in order to please Juste. Be calm, dignified, cold; measure out the happiness you give in proportion to what you receive. It is mean, but it is necessary.—You see, I am ruined by my merits. All I feel within me that is the best of me, that is fine, holy, noble,—all my virtues have been rocks on which my happiness is shipwrecked. I have ceased to be attractive because I am not six-and-thirty!—In some men's eyes youth is a defect! There is no guesswork in a guileless face.

"I laugh honestly, and that is quite wrong when, to be fascinating, you ought to be able to elaborate the melancholy,

suppressed smile of the fallen angels who are obliged to hide their long yellow teeth. A fresh complexion is so monotonous; far preferable is a doll's waxen surface, compounded of rouge, spermaceti, and cold-cream. I am straightforward, and double dealing is more pleasing! I am frankly in love like an honest woman, and I ought to be trained to tricks and manœuvres like a country actress. I am intoxicated with the delight of having one of the most charming men in France for my husband, and I tell him sincerely how fine a gentleman he is, how gracefully he moves, how handsome I think him; to win him I ought to look away with affected aversion, to hate love-making, to tell him that his air of distinction is simply an unhealthy pallor and the figure of a consumptive patient, to cry up the shoulders of the Farnese Hercules, to make him angry, keep him at a distance as though a struggle were needed to hide from him at the moment of happiness some imperfection which might destroy love. I am so unlucky as to be able to admire a fine thing without striving to give myself importance by bitter and envious criticism of everything glorious in poetry or beauty. I do not want to be told in verse and in prose by Canalis and Nathan that I have a superior intellect! I am a mere simple girl; I see no one but Calyste!

"If I had only run all over the world as she has; if, like her, I had said, 'I love you,' in every European tongue, I should be made much of, and pitied, and adored, and could serve him up a Macedonian banquet of cosmopolitan loves! A man does not thank you for your tenderness till you have set it off by contrast with malignity. So I, a well-born wife, must learn all impurity, the interested charms of a prostitute! . . . And Calyste, the dupe of this grimacing! . . . Oh, mother! oh, my dear Clotilde! I am stricken to death. My pride is a deceptive ægis; I am defenceless against sorrow; I still love my husband like a fool, and to bring him back to me I need to borrow the keen wit of indifference."

"Silly child," whispered Clotilde, "pretend that you are bent on vengeance."

"I mean to die blameless, without even the appearance of wrong-doing," replied Sabine. "Our vengeance should be worthy of our love."

"My child," said the Duchess, "a mother should look on life with colder eyes than yours. Love is not the end but the means of family life. Do not imitate that poor little Baronne de Macumer. Excessive passion is barren and fatal. And God sends us our afflictions for reasons of His own. . . .

"Now that Athénaïs' marriage is a settled thing, I shall have time to attend to you. I have already discussed the delicate position in which you are placed with your father and the Duc de Chaulieu and d'Ajuda. We shall find means to bring Calyste back to you."

"With the Marquise de Rochefide there is no cause for despair," said Clotilde, smiling at her sister. "She does not keep her adorers long."

"D'Ajuda, my darling, was Monsieur de Rochefide's brother-in-law. If our good Confessor approves of the little manœuvres we must achieve to ensure the success of the plan I have submitted to your father, I will guarantee Calyste's return. My conscience loathes the use of such methods, and I will lay them before the Abbé Brossette. We need not wait, my child, till you are *in extremis* to come to your assistance. Keep up your hopes. Your grief this evening is so great that I have let out my secret; I cannot bear not to give you a little encouragement."

"Will it cause Calyste any grief?" asked Sabine, looking anxiously at the Duchess.

"Bless me, shall I be such another fool?" asked Athénaïs simply.

"Oh! child, you cannot know the straits into which Virtue can plunge us when she allows herself to be overruled by Love!" replied Sabine, so bewildered with grief that she fell into a vein of poetry.

The words were spoken with such intense bitterness that the Duchess, enlightened by her daughter's tone, accent, and look, understood that there was some unconfessed trouble.

"Girls, it is midnight; go to bed," said she to the two others, whose eyes were sparkling.

"And am I in the way, too, in spite of my six-and-thirty years?" asked Clotilde ironically. And while Athénaïs was kissing her mother, she whispered in Sabine's ear:

"You shall tell me all about it. I will dine with you to-morrow. If mamma is afraid of compromising her conscience, I myself will rescue Calyste from the hands of the infidels."

"Well, Sabine," said the Duchess, leading her daughter into her bedroom, "tell me, my child, what is the new trouble."

"Oh, mother, I am done for!"

"Why?"

"I wanted to triumph over that horrible woman; I succeeded, I have another child coming, and Calyste loves her so vehemently that I foresee being absolutely deserted. When she has proof of this infidelity to her she will be furious!—Oh, I am suffering such torments that I must die. I know when he is going to her, know it by his glee; then his surliness shows me when he has left her. In short, he makes no secret of it; he cannot endure me. Her influence over him is as unwholesome as she is herself, body and soul. You will see; as her reward for making up some quarrel, she will insist on a public rupture with me, a breach like her own; she will carry him off to Switzerland perhaps, or to Italy. He has been saying that it is ridiculous to know nothing of Europe, and I can guess what these hints mean, thrown out as a warning. If Calyste is not cured within the next three months, I do not know what will come of it—I shall kill myself, I know!"

"Unhappy child! And your son? Suicide is a mortal sin."

"But do not you understand,—she might bear him a child; and if Calyste loved that woman's more than mine—Oh! this is the end of my patience and resignation."

She dropped on a chair; she had poured out the inmost thoughts of her heart; she had no hidden pang left; and sorrow is like the iron prop that sculptors place inside a clay figure, it is supporting, it is a power.

"Well, well, go home now, poor little thing! Face to face with so much suffering, perhaps the Abbé will give me absolution for the venial sins we are forced to commit by the trickery of the world. Leave me, daughter," she said, going to her prie-Dieu; "I will beseech the Lord and the Blessed Virgin more especially for you. Above all, do not neglect your religious duties if you hope for success."

"Succeed as we may, mother, we can only save the family honor. Calyste has killed the sacred fervor of love in me by exhausting all my powers, even of suffering. What a honeymoon was that in which from the first day I was bitterly conscious of his retrospective adultery!"

At about one in the afternoon of the following day one of the priests of the Faubourg Saint-Germain—a man distinguished among the clergy of Paris, designate as a Bishop in 1840, but who had three times refused a see—the Abbé Brossette was crossing the courtyard of the Hôtel Grandlieu with the peculiar gait one must call the ecclesiastical gait, so expressive is it of prudence, mystery, calmness, gravity, and dignity itself. He was a small, lean man, about fifty years of age, with a face as white as an old woman's, chilled by priestly fasting, furrowed by all the sufferings he made his own. Black eyes, alight with faith, but softened by an expression that was mysterious rather than mystical, gave life to this apostolic countenance. He almost smiled as he went up the steps, so little did he believe in the enormity of the case for which his penitent had sent for him; but as the Duchess' hand was a sieve for alms, she was well worth the time her guileless confessions stole from the serious troubles of his parish. On hearing him announced, the Duchess rose and went forward a few steps to meet him, an honor she did to none but cardinals, bishops, priests of every grade, duchesses older than herself, and personages of the blood royal.

"My dear Abbé," said she, pointing to an armchair, and speaking in a low tone, "I require the authority of your experience before I embark on a rather nasty intrigue, from

which, however, I hope for a good result; I wish to learn from you whether I shall find the way of salvation very thorny in consequence."

"Madame la Duchesse," said the Abbé Brossette, "do not mix up spiritual and wordly matters; they are often irreconcilable.—In the first place, what is this business?"

"My daughter Sabine, you know, is dying of grief. Monsieur du Guénic neglects her for Madame de Rochefide."

"It is terrible—a very serious matter; but you know what the beloved Saint-François de Sales says of such a case. And remember Madame de Guyon, who bewailed the lack of mysticism in the proofs of conjugal love; she would have been only too glad to find a Madame de Rochefide for her husband."

"Sabine is only too meek, she is only too completely the Christian wife; but she has not the smallest taste for mysticism."

"Poor young thing!" said the curé slily. "And what is your plan for remedying the mischief?"

"I have been so sinful, my dear Director, as to think that I might let loose at her a smart little gentleman, wilful, and stocked with evil characteristics, who will certainly get my son-in-law out of the way."

"Daughter," said he, stroking his chin, "we are not in the tribunal of the repentant; I need not speak as your judge.—From a wordly point of view, I confess it would be final—"

"Such a proceeding strikes me as truly odious!" she put in.

"And why? It is, no doubt, far more the part of a Christian to snatch a woman from her evil ways than to push her forward in them; still, when she has already gone so far as Madame de Rochefide, it is not the hand of man, but the hand of God, that can rescue the sinner. She needs a special sign from Heaven."

"Thank you, Father, for your indulgence," said the Duchess. "But we must remember that my son-in-law is brave, and a Breton; he was heroic at the time of that poor Madame's attempted rising. Now if the young scapegrace who should

undertake to charm Madame de Rochefide were to fall out with Calyste, and a duel should ensue——"

"There, Madame la Duchesse, you show your wisdom; this proves that in such devious courses we always find some stumbling-block."

"But I hit upon a means, my dear Abbé, of doing good, of rescuing Madame de Rochefide from the fatal path she is following, of bringing Calyste back to his wife, and of saving a poor wandering soul perhaps from hell——"

"But, then, why consult me?" said the curé, smiling.

"Well," said the Duchess, "I should have to do some ugly things——"

"You do not mean to rob any one?"

"On the contrary, I shall probably spend a good deal of money."

"You will not slander anybody, nor——"

"Oh!"

"Nor do any injury to your neighbor?"

"Well, well, I cannot answer for that."

"Let us hear this new plan," said the curé, really curious.

"If, instead of driving one nail out by another, thought I, as I knelt on my prie-Dieu, after beseeching the Blessed Virgin to guide me, I were to get Monsieur de Rochefide to take back his wife and pack off Calyste—then, instead of abetting evil to do good, I should be doing a good action through another by means of a no less good deed of my own——" The priest looked at the lady, and seemed thoughtful.

"The idea has evidently come to you from so far that——"

"Yes," said the simple and humble-minded woman, "and I have thanked the Virgin.—And I vowed that besides paying for a *neuvaine,* I would give twelve hundred francs to some poor family if I should succeed. But when I spoke of the matter to Monsieur de Grandlieu, he burst out laughing, and said— 'I really believe that at your time of life you women have a special devil all to yourselves.' "

"Monsieur le Duc said, in a husband's fashion, just what I was about to observe when you interrupted me," replied the Abbé, who could not help smiling.

"Oh, Father, if you approve of the plan, will you approve of the method of execution? The point will be to do with a certain Madame Schontz—a Béatrix of the Saint-Georges quarter—what I had intended to do with Béatrix; the Marquis will then return to his wife."

"I am sure you will do no wrong," said the Abbé dexterously, not choosing to know more, as he thought the result necessary. "And you can consult me if your conscience makes itself heard," he added. "Supposing that instead of affording the lady in the Rue Saint-Georges some fresh occasion of misconduct, you were to find her a husband?——"

"Ah, my dear Director, you have set right the only bad feature of my scheme. You are worthy to be an archbishop, and I hope to live to address you as your Eminence."

"In all this, I see but one hitch," the priest went on.

"And what is that?"

"Madame de Rochefide might keep your son-in-law even if she returned to her husband?"

"That is my affair," said the Duchess. "We, who so rarely intrigue, when we do——"

"Do it badly, very badly," said the Abbé. "Practice is needed for everything. Try to annex one of the rascally race who live on intrigue, and employ him without betraying yourself."

"Oh! Monsieur le Curé, but if we have recourse to hell, will heaven be on our side?"

"You are not in the confessional," replied the Abbé; "save your child."

The good Duchess, delighted with the keeper of her conscience, escorted him as far as the drawing-room door.

A storm, it will be seen, was gathering over Monsieur de Rochefide, who, at this time, was enjoying the greatest share of happiness that a Parisian need desire, finding himself quite

as much the master in Madame Schontz's house as in his wife's; as the Duke had very shrewdly remarked to his wife, it would seem impossible to upset so delightful and perfect a plan of life. This theory of the matter necessitates a few details as to the life led by Monsieur de Rochefide since his wife had placed him in the position of a deserted husband. We shall thus understand the enormous difference in the view taken by law and by custom of the two sexes in the same circumstances. Everything that works woe to a deserted wife becomes happiness to the deserted husband. This striking antithesis may perhaps induce more than one young wife to remain in her home and fight it out, like Sabine du Guénic, by practising the most cruel or the most inoffensive virtues, whichever she may prefer.

A few days after Béatrix's flight, Arthur de Rochefide—an only child after the death of his sister, the first wife of the Marquis d'Ajuda-Pinto, who left him no children—found himself master of the family mansion of the Rochefides, Rue d'Anjou-Saint-Honoré, and of two hundred thousand francs a year, left to him by his father. This fine fortune, added to that which he had when he married, raised his income, including his wife's portion, to a thousand francs a day. To a gentleman of such a character as Mademoiselle des Touches had sketched to Calyste, such a fortune was happiness. While his wife was occupied with lovemaking and motherhood, Rochefide was enjoying his vast possessions, but he did not waste the money any more than he would waste his intelligence. His burly, good-natured conceit, amply satisfied with the reputation for being a fine man, to which he owed some success, entitling him, as he believed, to condemn women as a class, gave itself full play in the sphere of intellect. He was gifted with the sort of wit which may be termed refracting, by the way he repeated other person's jests and witticisms from plays or the newspapers; he appropriated them as his own; he affected to ridicule them, caricaturing them in repetition, and using them as a formula of criticism; then his military high spirits—for he had served in the

King's Guard—lent spice to his conversation, so that dull women called him witty, and the rest dared not contradict them.

Arthur carried this system out in everything; he owed to nature the useful trick of being an imitator without being an ape; he could imitate quite seriously. And so, though he had no taste, he was always the first to take up and to drop a fashion. He was accused of giving too much time to his toilet, and of wearing stays; but he was a typical example of those men who, by accepting the notions and the follies of others, never offend any one, who, always being up to date, never grow any older. They are the heroes of the second-rate.

This husband was pitied; Béatrix was held inexcusable for having run away from the best fellow in the world; ridicule fell only on the wife. This worthy, loyal, and very silly gentleman, a member of every club, a subscriber to every absurdity to which blundering patriotism and party-spirit gave rise, with a facile good-nature which brought him to the front on every occasion, was, of course, bent on glorifying himself by some fashionable hobby. His chief pride was to be the sultan of a four-footed seraglio, managed by an old English groom, and this kennel cost him from four to five thousand francs a month. His favorite fad was running horses; he patronized breeders, and paid the expenses of a paper in the racing interest; but he knew little about horses, and from the bridle to the shoes trusted to his groom. This is enough to show that this "grass-husband" had nothing of his own—neither wit, nor taste, nor position, nor even absurdities; and his fortune had come to him from his forefathers.

After having tasted all the annoyances of married life, he was so happy to find himself a bachelor again, that he would say among friends, "I was born to good luck!" He rejoiced especially in being able to live free of the expenses to which married folks are compelled; and his house, in which nothing had been altered since his father's death, was in the state of a man's home when he is traveling; he rarely went there, never fed there, and scarcely ever slept there.

This was the history of this neglect. After many love affairs, tired of women of fashion, who are indeed weariful enough, and who set too many dry thorn-hedges round the happiness they have to give, he had practically married Madame Schontz, a woman notorious in the world of Fanny Beaupré and Suzanne du Val-Noble, of Mariettes, Florentines, Jenny Cadines, and the like. This world—of which one of our draughtsmen wittily remarked, as he pointed to the whirl of an Opera ball, "When you think that all that mob is well housed, and dressed, and fed, you can form a good idea of what men are!"—this dangerous world has already been seen in this History of Manners in the typical figures of Florine and the famous Malaga (of *A Daughter of Eve* and *The Imaginary Mistress*); but to paint it faithfully, the historian would have to represent such persons in some numerical proportion to the variety of their strange individual lives, ending in poverty of the most hideous kind, in early death, in ease, in happy marriage, or sometimes in great wealth.

Madame Schontz, at first known as la Petite Aurélie, to distinguish her from a rival far less clever than herself, belonged to the higher class of these women on whose social uses no doubt can be thrown either by the Préfet of the Seine or by those who take an interest in the prosperity of the city of Paris. Certainly the "rats" accused of devouring fortunes, which are often imaginary, in some respects are more like a beaver. Without the Aspasias of the Notre-Dame de Lorette quarter, fewer houses would be built in Paris. Pioneers of fresh stucco, in tow of speculation, pitch their outlying tents along the hillsides of Montmartre, beyond those deserts of masonry which are to be seen in the streets round the Place de l'Europe—Amsterdam, Milan, Stockholm, London, and Moscow—architectural steppes betraying their emptiness by endless placards announcing *Apartments to let.*

The position of these ladies is commensurate with that of their lodgings in these innominate regions. If the house is near the line marked by the Rue de Provence, the woman has money in the Funds, her income is assured; but if she lives

out near the exterior boulevards, or on the height towards the horrible suburb of Batignolles, she is certainly poor.

Now when Monsieur de Rochefide first met Madame Schontz, she was lodging on the third floor of the only house then standing in the Rue de Berlin. The name of this unmarried wife, as you will have understood, was neither Aurélie nor Schontz. She concealed her father's name—that of an old soldier of the Empire, the perennial colonel who always adorns the origin of these existences, as the father or the seducer. Madame Schontz had enjoyed the benefits of a gratuitous education at Saint-Denis, where the young persons are admirably taught, but where the young persons are not provided on leaving with husbands or a living—an admirable foundation of the Emperor's, the only thing lacking being the Emperor himself! "I shall be there to provide for the daughters of my legionaries," said he, in answer to one of his Ministers who looked forward to the future. And in the same way Napoleon said, "I shall be there," to the members of the Institute, to whom it would be better to give no honorarium at all than to pay them eighty-three francs a month, less than the wages of many an office clerk.

Aurélie was very certainly the daughter of the valiant Colonel Schiltz, a leader of those daring Alsatian partisans who so nearly succeeded in saving the Emperor in the French campaign; he died at Metz, robbed, neglected, and ruined. In 1814 Napoleon sent little Joséphine Schiltz, then nine years old, to school at Saint-Denis. Without father or mother, home or money, the poor child was not driven out of the Institution on the second return of the Bourbons. She remained there as under-teacher till 1827; but then her patience failed, and her beauty led her astray. When she was of age, Joséphine Schiltz, the Empress' goddaughter, embarked on the adventurous life of the courtesan, tempted to this doubtful career by the fatal example of some of her school-fellows as destitute as she was, and who rejoiced in their decision. She substituted *on* for *il* in her father's name, and placed herself under the protection of Saint-Aurelia.

Clever, witty, and well informed, she made more mistakes than her more stupid companions, whose wrong-doing was always based on self-interest. After various connections with writers, some poor but unmannerly, some clever but in debt; after trying her fortune with some rich men as close-fisted as they were silly; after sacrificing ease to a true passion, and learning in every school where experience may be gained, one day, when, in the depths of poverty, she was dancing at Valentino's—the first stage to Musard's—dressed in a borrowed gown, hat, and cape, she attracted Rochefide's attention; he had come to see the famous galop! Her cleverness bewitched the gentleman, who had exhausted every sensation; and when, two years after, being deserted by Béatrix, whose wit had often disconcerted him, he allied himself with a second-hand Béatrix "of the Thirteenth Arrondissement," no one thought of blaming him.

We may here give a sketch of the four seasons of such a happy home. It is desirable to show how the theory of "a marriage in the Thirteenth Arrondissement" includes all the whole connection. Whether a marquis of forty or a retired shopkeeper of sixty, a millionaire six times over or a man of narrow private means, a fine gentleman or a middle-class citizen, the tactics of passion, barring the differences inseparable from dissimilar social spheres, never vary. Heart and banking account maintain an exact and definite relation. And you will be able to form an idea of the obstacles the Duchess must meet with to her charitable scheme.

Few persons understand the power of words over ordinary folks in France, or the mischief done by the wits who invent them. For instance, no book-keeper could add up the figures of the sums of money which have lain unproductive and rusty at the bottom of generous hearts and full coffers in consequence of the mean phrase, *Tirer une carotte*—to fleece or bleed a victim. The words have become so common that they must be allowed to deface this page. Besides, if we venture into the "Thirteenth Arrondissement," we must needs adopt its picturesque language.

Monsieur de Rochefide, like all small minds, was constantly in fear of being bled. From the beginning of his attachment to Madame Schontz, Arthur was on his guard, and was at that time a dreadful screw, *très rat,* to use another slang word of the studio and the brothel. This word *rat* (which in French has many slang uses) when applied to a young girl means the person entertained, but applied to a man means the stingy entertainer. Madame Schontz had too much intelligence, and knew men too thoroughly, not to found high hopes on such a beginning. Monsieur de Rochefide allowed Madame Schontz five hundred francs a month, furnished, meagerly enough, a set of rooms at twelve hundred francs a year on the second floor of a house in the Rue Coquenard, and set himself to study Aurélie's character; and she, finding herself spied upon, gave him character to study.

Rochefide was delighted to have come across a woman of such a noble nature, but it did not astonish him; her mother was a Barnheim of Baden, quite a lady! And then Aurélie had been so well brought up! Speaking English, German, and Italian, she was versed in foreign literature; she could pit herself, without discomfiture, against pianists of the second class. And, note the point! she behaved as regarded her talents like a woman of breeding; she never talked about them. In a painter's studio she would take up a brush in fun, and sketch a head with so much *go* as to amaze the company. As a pastime, when she was pining as a school teacher, she had dabbled in some sciences, but her life as a kept mistress had sown salt over all this good seed, and, of course, she laid the flower of these precious growths, revived for him, at Arthur's feet. Thus did Aurélie at first make a display of disinterestedness to match the pleasures she could give, which enabled this light corvette to cast her grappling-irons firmly on board the statelier craft. Still, even at the end of the first year, she made a vulgar noise in the ante-room, managing to come in just when the Marquis was waiting for her, and tried to hide the disgracefully muddy hem of her gown in such a way as to make it more conspicuous. In short, she so cleverly contrived

to persuade her *Gros Papa* that her utmost ambition, after so many vicissitudes, was to enjoy a simple, middle-class existence, that by the end of ten months the second phase of their connection began.

Then Madame Schontz had a fine apartment in the Rue Saint-Georges. Arthur, who could no longer conceal from her the fact of his wealth, gave her handsome furniture, a service of plate, twelve hundred francs a month, and a little low carriage, with a single horse, by the week, and he granted her a little groom with a fairly good grace. She knew what this munificence was worth; she detected the motives of her Arthur's conduct, and saw in them the calculations of a close-fisted man. Tired of living at restaurants, where the food is generally execrable, where the simplest dinner of any refinement costs sixty francs, and two hundred for a party of four friends, Rochefide offered Madame Schontz forty francs a day for his dinner and a friend's, wine included. Aurélie had no mind to refuse. After getting all her moral bills of exchange accepted, drawn on Monsieur de Rochefide's habits at a year's date, she was favorably heard when she asked for five hundred francs a year more for dress, on the plea that her *Gros Papa,* whose friends all belonged to the Jockey Club, might not be ashamed of her.

"A pretty thing, indeed," said she, "if Rastignac, Maxime de Trailles, la Roche-Hugon, Ronquerolles, Laginski, Lenoncourt, and the rest should see you with a Madame Évrard! Put your trust in me, *Gros Père,* and you will be the gainer."

And Aurélie did, in fact, lay herself out for a fresh display of virtues in these new circumstances. She sketched a part for herself as the housewife, in which she won ample credit. She made both ends meet, said she, at the end of the month, and had no debts, on two thousand five hundred francs, such a thing as had never been seen in the Faubourg Saint-Germain of the Thirteenth Arrondissement—the upper ten of the demireps world; and she gave dinners infinitely better than Nucingen's, with first-class wines at ten and twelve francs a bottle. So that Rochefide, amazed and delighted to be able

to ask his friends pretty often to his mistress' house as a matter of economy, would say to her, with his arm round her waist, "You are a perfect treasure!"

Before long he took a third share in an opera box for her, and at last went with her to first-night performances. He began to take counsel of his Aurélie, acknowledging the soundness of her advice; she allowed him to appropriate the wit she was always ready with; and her sallies, being new, won him the reputation for being an amusing man. At last he felt perfectly sure that she loved him truly, and for himself. Aurélie refused to make a Russian prince happy at the rate of five thousand francs a month.

"You are a happy man, my dear Marquis," cried old Prince Galathionne as they ended a rubber of whist at the club. "Yesterday, when you left us together, I tried to get her away from you; but 'Mon Prince,' said she, 'you are not handsomer than Rochefide though you are older; you would beat me, and he is like a father to me; show me then the quarter of a good reason for leaving him! I do not love Arthur with the crazy passion I had for the young rogues with patent leather boots, whose bills I used to pay; but I love him as a wife loves her husband when she is a decent woman.'—And she showed me to the door."

This speech, which had no appearance of exaggeration, had the effect of adding considerably to the state of neglect and shabbiness that disfigured the home of the Rochefides. Ere long Arthur had transplanted his existence and his pleasures to Madame Schontz's lodgings, and found it answer; for by the end of three years he had four hundred thousand francs to invest.

Then began the third phase. Madame Schontz became the kindest of mothers to Arthur's son; she fetched him from school and took him back herself; she loaded him with presents, sweetmeats, and pocket money; and the child, who adored her, called her his "little mamma." She advised her Arthur in the management of his money-matters, making him buy consols at the fall before the famous treaty of London,

which led to the overthrow of the Ministry on the 1st of March. Arthur made two hundred thousand francs, and Aurélie did not ask for a sou. Rochefide, being a gentleman, invested his six hundred thousand francs in Bank bills, half of them in the name of Mademoiselle Joséphine Schiltz.

A small house, rented in the Rue de la Bruyère, was placed in the hands of Grindot, that great architect on a small scale, with instructions to make it a delicious jewel case. Thenceforth Rochefide left everything in the hands of Madame Schontz, who received the dividends and paid the bills. Thus installed in his wife's place, she justified him by making her *Gros Papa* happier than ever. She understood his whims, and satisfied them, as Madame de Pompadour humored the fancies of Louis XV. She was, in fact, *maîtresse en titre*—absolute mistress.

She now allowed herself to patronize certain charming young men, artists and literary youths newly born to glory, who disowned the ancients and the moderns alike, and tried to achieve a great reputation by achieving nothing else. Madame Schontz's conduct, a master-work of tactics, shows her superior intelligence. In the first place, a party of ten or twelve young men amused Arthur, supplied him with witty sayings and shrewd opinions on every subject, and never cast any doubt on the fidelity of the mistress of the house; in the second place, they looked up to her as a highly intellectual woman. These living advertisements, these walking "puffs," reported that Madame Schontz was the most charming woman to be found on the borderland dividing the Thirteenth Arrondissement from the other twelve.

Her rivals, Suzanne Gaillard, who since 1838 had the advantage over her of being a legitimately married wife, Fanny Beaupré, Mariette, and Antonia, spread more than scandalous reports as to the beauty of these youths and the kindness with which Monsieur de Rochefide welcomed them. Madame Schontz, who could, she declared, give these ladies a start of three bad jokes and beat them, exclaimed one evening, at a

supper given by Florine after an opera, when she had set forth to them her good fortune and her success, "Do thou likewise!" a retort which had been remembered against her. At this stage of her career Madame Schontz got the racers sold, in deference to certain considerations, which she owed no doubt to the critical acumen of Claude Vignon, a frequent visitor.

"I could quite understand," said she one day, after lashing the horses with her tongue, "that princes and rich men should take horse-breeding to heart, but for the good of the country, and not for the childish satisfaction of a gambler's vanity. If you had stud stables on your estates and could breed a thousand or twelve hundred horses, if each owner sent the best horse in his stable, and if every breeder in France and Navarre should compete every time, it would be a great and fine thing; but you buy a single horse, as the manager of a theatre engages his artists, you reduce an institution to the level of a game, you have a Bourse for legs as you have a Bourse for shares. It is degrading. Would you spend sixty thousand francs to see in the papers—'Monsieur de Rochefide's *Lélia* beat Monsieur le Duc de Rhétoré's *Fleur-de-Genêt* by a length——' Why, you had better give the money to a poet who will hand you down to immortality in verse or in prose, like the late lamented Montyon!"

By dint of such goading the Marquis was brought to see the hollowness of the turf; he saved his sixty thousand francs; and next year Madame Schontz could say to him: "I cost you nothing now, Arthur."

Many rich men envied the Marquis his Aurélie, and tried to win her from him; but, like the Russian Prince, they wasted their old age.

"Listen to me, my dear fellow," she had said a fortnight ago to Finot, now a very rich man, "I know that Rochefide would forgive me for a little flirtation if I really fell in love with another man, but no woman would give up a marquis who is such a thorough good fellow to take up with a *parvenu* like you. You would never keep me in such a position as

Arthur has placed me in. He has made me all but his wife, and half a lady, and you could never do as much for me even if you married me."

This was the last rivet that held the fortunate slave. The speech reached those absent ears for which it was intended.

Thus began the fourth phase, that of habit, the crowning victory of the plan of campaign which enables a woman of this stamp to say of the man, "I have him safe!" Rochefide, who had just bought a pretty house in the name of Mademoiselle Joséphine Schiltz, a mere trifle of eighty thousand francs, had, at the time when the Duchess was laying her plans, come to the point when he was vain of his mistress, calling her Ninon II., and boasting of her strict honesty, her excellent manners, her information, and wit. He had concentrated his good and bad qualities, his tastes and pleasures all in Madame Schontz, and had reached that stage of life when from weariness, indifference, or philosophy a man changes no more, but is faithful to his wife or his mistress.

The importance to which Madame Schontz had risen in five years may be understood when it is said that to be introduced to her a man had to be mentioned to her some time in advance. She had refused to make the acquaintance of certain tiresome rich men, and others of fly-blown reputations; she made no exceptions to this strict rule but in the case of certain great aristocratic names.

"They have a right to be stupid," she would say, "because they are swells."

Ostensibly she possessed the three hundred thousand francs that Rochefide had given her, and that a thorough good fellow, a stockbroker named Gobenheim—the only stockbroker she allowed in her house—managed for her; but she also managed for herself a little private fortune of two hundred thousand francs, formed of her savings on her house allowance for three years, by constantly buying and selling with the three hundred thousand francs, which were all she would ever confess to.

"The more you make, the less you seem to have," Gobenheim remarked one day.

"Water is so dear!" said she.

This unrevealed store was increased by the jewelry and diamonds which Aurélie would wear for a month and then sell, and by money given her for fancies she had forgotten. When she heard herself called rich, Madame Schontz would reply that, at present rates, three hundred thousand francs brought in twelve thousand francs, and that she had spent it all in the hard times of her life when Lousteau had been her lover.

Such method showed a plan; and Madame Schontz, you may be sure, had a plan. For the last two years she had been jealous of Madame du Bruel, and the desire to be married at the mairie and in church gnawed at her heart. Every social grade has its forbidden fruit, some little thing exaggerated by desire, till it seems as weighty as the globe. This ambition had, of course, its duplicate in the ambition of a second Arthur, whom watchfulness had entirely failed to discover. Bixiou would have it that the favorite was Léon de Lora; the painter believed that it was Bixiou, who was now past forty, and should be thinking of settling. Suspicion also fell on Victor de Vernisset, a young poet of the Canalis school, whose passion for Madame Schontz was a perfect madness; while the poet accused Stidmann, a sculptor, of being his favored rival. This artist, a very good-looking young man, worked for goldsmiths, for bronze dealers, and jewelers; he dreamed of being a Benvenuto Cellini. Claude Vignon, the young Comte de la Palférine, Gobenheim, Vermanton, a cynic philosopher, and other frequenters of this lively salon were suspected by turns, but all acquitted. No one was a match for Madame Schontz, not even Rochefide, who fancied she had a weakness for la Palférine, a clever youth; she was, in fact, virtuous in her own interests, and thought only of making a good match.

Only one man of equivocal repute was ever to be seen at Madame Schontz's, and that was Couture, who had more than once been howled at on the Bourse; but Couture was one of Madame Schontz's oldest friends, and she alone remained

faithful to him. The false alarm of 1840 swept away this speculator's last capital; he had trusted to the 1st of March Ministry; Aurélie, seeing that luck was against him, made Rochefide play for the other side. It was she who spoke of the last overthrow of this inventor of premiums and joint-stock companies as a *Découture* (unripping a rip).

Couture, delighted to find a knife and fork laid for him at Aurélie's, and getting from Finot—the cleverest, or perhaps the luckiest of parvenus—a few thousand-franc notes now and then, was the only man shrewd enough to offer his name to Madame Schontz, who studied him to ascertain whether this bold speculator would have strength enough to make a political career for himself, and gratitude enough not to desert his wife. A man of about forty-three years old, and worn for his age, Couture did not redeem the ill-repute of his name by his birth; he had little to say of his progenitors. Madame Schontz was lamenting the rarity of men of business capacity, when one day Couture himself introduced to her a provincial gentleman who happened to be provided with the two handles by which women hold this sort of pitcher when they mean not to drop it.

A sketch of this personage will be a portrait of a certain type of young man of the day. A digression will, in this case, be history.

In 1838, Fabien du Ronceret, the son of a President of the Chamber at the King's Court of Caen, having lost his father about a year before, came from Alençon, throwing up his appointment as magistrate, in which, as he said, his father had made him waste his time, and settled in Paris. His intention now was to get on in the world by cutting a dash, a Norman scheme somewhat difficult of accomplishment, since he had scarcely eight thousand francs a year, his mother still being alive, and enjoying the life-interest of some fine house property in the heart of Alençon. This youth had already, in the course of various visits to Paris, tried his foot on the tight rope; he had discerned the weak point of the social stucco restoration of 1830, and meant to work on it for his own profit,

following the lead of the sharpers of the middle class. To explain this, we must glance at one of the results of the new state of things.

Modern notions of equality, which in our day have assumed such extravagant proportions, have inevitably developed in private life—in a parallel line with political life—pride, conceit, and vanity, the three grand divisions of the social *I*. Fools wish to pass for clever men, clever men want to be men of talent, men of talent expect to be treated as geniuses: as to the geniuses, they are more reasonable; they consent to be regarded as no more than demi-gods. This tendency of the spirit of the time, which in the Chamber of Deputies makes the manufacturer jealous of the statesman, and the administrator jealous of the poet, prompts fools to run down clever men, clever men to run down men of talent, men of talent to run down those who are a few inches higher than themselves, and the demi-gods to threaten institutions, the throne itself, in short, everything and everybody that does not worship them unconditionally.

As soon as a nation is so impolitic as to overthrow recognized social superiority, it opens the sluice-gates, through which rushes forthwith a torrent of second-rate ambitions, the least of which would fain be first. According to the democrats, its aristocracy was a disease, but a definite and circumscribed disease; it has exchanged this for ten armed and contending aristocracies, the worst possible state of things. To proclaim the equality of all is to declare the rights of the envious. We are enjoying now the Saturnalia of the Revolution transferred to the apparently peaceful sphere of intelligence, industry, and politics; it seems as though the reputations earned by hard work, good service, and talent were a privilege granted at the expense of the masses. The agrarian law will ere long be extended to the field of glory.

Thus, at no time have men demanded public recognition on more puerile grounds. They must be remarked at any cost for an affectation of devotion to the cause of Poland, to the penitential system, to the future prospects of released convicts,

to that of small rogues under or over the age of twelve, to any kind of social quackery. These various manias give rise to spurious dignities—Presidents, Vice-presidents, and Secretaries of Societies, which, in Paris, outnumber the social questions to be solved. Society on a grand scale has been demolished to make way for a thousand small ones in the image of the dead one.

Do not all these parasitical organisms point to decomposition? Are they not the worms swarming in the carcase? All these social bodies are the daughters of one mother—Vanity. Not thus does Catholic charity act, or true benevolence; these study disease while healing its sores, and do not speechify in public on morbid symptoms for the mere pleasure of talking.

Fabien du Ronceret, without being a superior man, had divined, by the exercise of that acquisitive spirit peculiar to the Norman race, all the advantage he might take of this public distemper. Each age has its characteristic, which clever men trade on. Fabien's only aim was to get himself talked about.

"My dear fellow, a man must make his name known if he wants to get on," said he as he left, to du Bousquier, a friend of his father's, and the King of Alençon. "In six months I shall be better known than you."

This was how Fabien interpreted the spirit of his time; he did not rule it, he obeyed it.

He had first appeared in *bohemia,* a district of the moral topography of Paris (see *A Prince of Bohemia*), and was known as "The Heir," in consequence of a certain premeditated parade of extravagance. Du Ronceret had taken advantage of Couture's follies in behalf of pretty Madame Cadine—one of the newer actresses, who was considered extremely clever at the second-class theatres—for whom he had furnished a charming ground-floor apartment with a garden, in the Rue Blanche.

This was the way in which the men made acquaintance. The Norman, in search of ready-made luxury, bought the furniture from Couture, with all the decorative fixtures he

could not remove from the rooms, a garden room for smoking in, with a veranda built of rustic woodwork, hung with Indian matting, and decorated with pottery, to get to the smoking-room in rainy weather. When the Heir was complimented on his rooms, he called them his den. The provincial took care not to mention that Grindot the architect had lavished all his art there, as had Stidmann on the carvings, and Léon de Lora on the paintings; for his greatest fault was that form of conceit which goes so far as lying with a view to self-glorification.

The Heir put the finishing touch to this splendor by building a conservatory against a south wall, not because he loved flowers, but because he meant to attack public repute by means of horticulture. At this moment he had almost attained his end. As Vice-president of some gardening society, under the presidency of the Duc de Vissembourg, brother of the Prince de Chiavari, the younger son of the late Maréchal Vernon, he had been able to decorate the vice-presidential coat with the ribbon of the Legion of Honor after an exhibition of horticultural produce, which he opened by an address given out as his own, but purchased of Lousteau for five hundred francs. He was conspicuous by wearing a flower given to him by old Blondet of Alençon, Émile Blondet's father, which he said had bloomed in his conservatory.

But this triumph was nothing. Du Ronceret, who was anxious to pass as a man of superior intelligence, had schemed to ally himself with a set of famous men, to shine by a reflected light, a plan very difficult to carry out on the basis of an income of eight thousand francs. And, in fact, he had looked by turns, but in vain, to Bixiou, Stidmann, and Léon de Lora to introduce him to Madame Schontz, so as to become a member of that menagerie of lions of every degree. Then he dined Couture so often, that Couture proved categorically to Madame Schontz that she had to admit such an eccentric specimen, were it only to secure him as one of those graceful unpaid messengers whom house-mistresses are glad to employ on the errands for which servants are unsuited.

By the end of the third evening Madame Schontz knew Fabien through and through, and said to herself, "If Couture does not serve my turn, I am perfectly certain of this man. My future life runs on wheels."

So this simpleton, laughed at by every one, was the man of her choice; but with a deliberate purpose which made the preference an insult, and the choice was never suspected from its utter improbability. Madame Schontz turned Fabien's brain by stolen smiles, by little scenes on the threshold when she saw him out the last, if Monsieur de Rochefide spent the evening there. She constantly invited Fabien to be the third with Arthur in her box at the Italiens, or at first-night performances; excusing herself by saying that he had done her this or that service, and that she had no other way of returning it.

Men have a rivalry of conceit among themselves—in common indeed with women—in their desire to be loved for themselves. Hence of all flattering attachments, none is more highly valued than that of a Madame Schontz for the man she makes the object of her heart's affections in contrast with the other kind of love. Such a woman as Madame Schontz, who played at being a fine lady, and who was in truth a very superior woman, was, as she could not fail to be, a subject of pride to Fabien, who fell so desperately in love with her that he never appeared in her presence but in full dress, patent leather boots, lemon-colored gloves, an embroidered and frilled shirt, an endless variety of waistcoats, in short, every external symptom of the sincerest adoration.

A month before the conference between the Duchess and the Abbé, Madame Schontz had confided the secret of her birth and her real name to Fabien, who could not understand the object of this disclosure. A fortnight later Madame Schontz, puzzled by the Norman's lack of comprehension, exclaimed to herself:

"Good heavens, what an idiot I am! Why, he believes that I am in love with him!"

So then she took him out for a drive in the Bois, in her

carriage, for she had had a low phaeton with a pair of horses for a year past.

In the course of this public *tête-à-tête* she discussed the question of her ultimate fate, and explained that she wished to get married.

"I have seven hundred thousand francs," said she; "and I may confess to you that if I could meet with a man of great ambition, who could understand me thoroughly, I would change my condition; for, do you know, the dream of my life is to be a good citizen's wife, connected with a respectable family, and to make my husband and children all very happy."

The Norman was content to be a favorite with Madame Schontz; but to marry her seemed madness beyond discussion to a bachelor of eight-and-thirty, of whom the Revolution of July had made a Judge. Seeing his hesitation, Madame Schontz made the Heir a butt for the arrows of her wit, her irony, and her scorn, and turned to Couture. Within a week the speculator, tempted by a hint of her savings, offered her his hand, his heart, and his future prospects—all three of equal value.

Madame Schontz's manœuvres had reached this stage when Madame de Grandlieu began to inquire as to the manners and customs of this Béatrix of the Rue Saint-Georges.

Following the Abbé Brossette's advice, the Duchess begged the Marquis d'Ajuda to bring to her house that prince of political jugglers, the famous Comte de Trailles, the Archduke of bohemia, and the youngest of the young, though he was now fifty. Monsieur d'Ajuda arranged to dine with Maxime at the club in the Rue de Beaune, and proposed that they should go on together to play dummy whist with the Duc de Grandlieu, who, having had an attack of the gout before dinner, would be alone. Though the Duke's son-in-law, the Duchess' cousin, had every right to introduce him into a house where he had never yet set foot, Maxime de Trailles was under no misapprehension as to the invitation thus conveyed; he concluded that either the Duke or the Duchess wanted to

make use of him. A not unimportant feature of the time is the club life, where men gamble with others whom they would never receive in their own houses.

The Duke so far honored Maxime as to confess that he was ill; after fifteen games of whist he went to bed, leaving his wife with Maxime and d'Ajuda. The Duchess, supported by the Marquis, explained her plans to Monsieur de Trailles, and asked his assistance, while seeming only to ask his advice. Maxime listened to the end without saying anything decisive, and would not speak till the Duchess had asked him point-blank to help her.

"I quite understand the matter, madame," said he after giving her one of those looks—keen, astute, and comprehensive—by which these old hands can compromise their allies. "D'Ajuda will tell you that I, if any one in Paris, can manage this double business, without your appearing in it, without its being known even that I have been here this evening. But, first of all, we must settle the Preliminaries of Léoben. What do you propose to sacrifice for this end?"

"Everything that is required."

"Very good, Madame la Duchesse. Then as the reward of my services, you will do me the honor of receiving here and giving your countenance to Madame la Comtesse de Trailles?"

"Are you married?" exclaimed d'Ajuda.

"I am going to be married in a fortnight to the only daughter of a wealthy family, but to the last degree middle class! It is a sacrifice to opinion; I am adopting the strictest principles of my government. I am casting my old skin.

"So you will understand, Madame la Duchesse, how important for me it would be that you and your family should take up my wife. I am quite certain to be elected deputy when my father-in-law retires from his post, as he intends doing, and I have been promised a diplomatic appointment that befits my new fortune.—I cannot see why my wife should not be as well received as Madame de Portenduère in a society of young wives where such stars are to be seen as Mesdames de

la Bastie, Georges de Maufrigneuse, de l'Estorade, du Guénic, d'Ajuda, de Restaud, de Rastignac, and de Vandenesse. My wife is pretty, and I will undertake to wake her up.

"Does this meet your views, Madame la Duchesse?

"You are a religious woman; and if you say yes, your promise, which I know will be sacred, will help me immensely in my changed life. And it will be another good action!—Alas, I have long been the chief of a rascally crew; but I want to be quit of all that. After all, our arms are good: Azure, a chimera or, spouting fire, armed gules, scaled vert; a chief counter erminé; granted by Francis I., who thought it desirable to give a patent of nobility to Louis XI.'s groom of the chambers—and we have been counts since the time of Catherine de Medicis."

"I will receive and introduce your wife," said the Duchess solemnly, "and my family shall never turn their back on her, I give you my word."

"Oh, Madame la Duchesse," exclaimed Maxime, visibly touched, "if Monsieur le Duc will also condescend to treat me kindly, I promise you on my part to make your plan succeed with no great loss to yourself.—But," he went on, after a pause, "you must pledge yourself to obey my instructions. . . . This is the last intrigue of my bachelor life; it must be carried through with all the more care because it is a good action," he said, smiling.

"Obey?" said the Duchess. "But must I appear in all this?"

"Indeed, madame, I will not compromise you," cried Maxime, "and I respect you too implicitly to ask for security. You have only to follow my advice. Thus, for instance, du Guénic must be carried off by his wife like a sacred object, and kept away for two years; she must take him to see Switzerland, Italy, Germany, the more strange lands the better——"

"Ah, that answers a fear expressed by my director," exclaimed the Duchess guilelessly, as she remembered the Abbé Brossette's judicious observation. Maxime and d'Ajuda could

not help smiling at the idea of this coincidence of heaven and hell.

"To prevent Madame de Rochefide from ever seeing Calyste again," she added, "we will all travel, Juste and his wife, Calyste and Sabine, and I. I will leave Clotilde with her father——"

"Do not let us shout 'Victory' just yet, madame," said Maxime. "I foresee immense difficulties; I shall conquer them, no doubt. Your esteem and favor are a prize for which I will plunge through much dirt; but it will be——"

"Dirt!" said the Duchess, interrupting the modern *condottière* with a face equally expressive of disgust and surprise.

"Ay, and you will have to step in it, madame, since I act for you. Are you really so ignorant of the pitch of blindness to which Madame de Rochefide has brought your son-in-law? I know it, through Nathan and Canalis, between whom she was hesitating when Calyste threw himself into that lioness' maw. Béatrix has made the noble Breton believe that she never loved any one but him, that she is virtuous, that her attachment to Conti was of the head only, and that her heart and the rest had very little to do with it—a musical passion, in short. As to Rochefide, that was a matter of duty.

"So, you understand, she is virginal. And she proves it by forgetting her son; for a year past she has not made the smallest attempt to see him. The little Count is, in point of fact, nearly twelve years old, and he has found a mother in Madame Schontz; motherhood is the mania, as you know, of women of that stamp.

"Du Guénic would be cut in pieces, and let his wife be cut in pieces, for Béatrix. And do you suppose that it is easy to drag a man back from the depths of the abyss of credulity? Why, madame, Shakespeare's Iago would waste all his handkerchiefs in such a task. It is generally imagined that Othello, his younger brother Orosmane, and Saint-Preux, and René, and Werther, and other lovers who are famous, typify love! Their icy-hearted creators never knew what was meant

by an absorbing passion, Molière alone had a suspicion of it.—Love, Madame la Duchesse, is not an attachment to a noble woman, to a Clarissa; a great achievement that, on my word! —Love is to say to one's self: 'The woman I worship is a wretch; she is deceiving me, she will deceive me again, she is an old hand, she smells of the burning pit!'—and to fly to her, to find the blue of heaven, the flowers of Paradise. That is how Molière loved, and how we love, we scamps and rips; for I can cry at the great scene in *Arnolphe!* That is how your son-in-law loves Béatrix!

"I shall have some difficulty in getting Rochefide from Madame Schontz; however, Madame Schontz can, no doubt, be got to abet us; I will study her household. As to Calyste and Béatrix, it will need an axe to divide them, treachery of the best quality, infamy so base that your virtuous imagination could not go so low unless your director held your hand. —You have asked for the impossible, you shall have it. Still, in spite of my determination to employ the sword and fire, I cannot absolutely pledge myself to success. I know lovers who do not shrink under the most entire disenchantment. You are too virtuous to understand the power of women who have no virtue."

"Do not attempt these infamies till I shall have consulted the Abbé Brossette, to know how far I am involved in them," cried the Duchess, with an artlessness that revealed how selfish religion can be.

"You know nothing about it, my dear mother," said the Marquis d'Ajuda.

On the steps, while waiting for Ajuda's carriage to some up, the Marquis said to Maxime:

"You have frightened our good Duchess."

"But she has no idea of the difficulty of the thing she wants done!—Are we going to the Jockey Club? Rochefide must ask me to dine to-morrow at Schontz's rooms; in the course of to-night my plans will be laid, and I shall have chosen the pawns in my chessboard that are to move in the game I mean to play. In the days of her splendor Béatrix would have

nothing to say to me; I will settle accounts with her, and avenge your sister-in-law so cruelly, that perhaps she will think I have overdone it."

On the following day Rochefide told Madame Schontz that Maxime de Trailles was coming to dinner. This was to warn her to display the utmost luxury, and prepare the very best fare for this distinguished connoisseur, who was the terror of every woman of Madame Schontz's class; and she gave as much care to her toilet as to arranging her house in a fitting way to receive the great man.

In Paris there are almost as many royal heads as there are different arts or special sciences, faculties, or professions; the best of those who exercise each has a royal dignity proper to himself; he is revered and respected by his peers, who know the difficulties of his work, and admire unreservedly the man who can defy them. In the eyes of the corps de ballet and courtesans Maxime was an extremely powerful and capable man, for he had succeeded in being immensely loved. He was admired by everybody who knew how hard it is to live in Paris on decent terms with your creditors; and he had never had any rival in elegance, demeanor, and wit but the famous de Marsay, who had employed him on political missions. This is enough to account for his interview with the Duchess, his influence over Madame Schontz, and the authority of his tone in a conference he intended to hold on the Boulevard des Italiens with a young man, who was already famous though recently introduced to the bohemia of Paris.

As he rose next morning, Maxime de Trailles heard Finot announced, to whom he had sent the night before; he begged him to arrange a fortuitous meeting at breakfast at the Café Anglais between Couture, Lousteau, and himself, where they would chat in his hearing. Finot, who was to Maxime de Trailles as a lieutenant in the presence of a Marshal of France, could refuse him nothing; it was indeed too dangerous to provoke this lion. So when Maxime came in to breakfast, he found Finot and his two friends at a table; the con-

versation had already been directed towards the subject of Madame Schontz. Couture, cleverly steered by Finot and Lousteau, who, unknown to himself, was Finot's abettor, let out everything that the Comte de Trailles wanted to know about Madame Schontz.

By one o'clock, Maxime, chewing his toothpick, was talking to du Tillet on the steps of Tortoni's, where speculators form a little Bourse preliminary to real dealings on 'Change. He seemed to be absorbed in business, but he was waiting to see the young Comte de la Palférine, who must pass that way sooner or later. The Boulevard des Italiens is now what the Pont Neuf was in 1650; everybody who is anybody crosses it at least once a day.

In fact, within ten minutes, Maxime took his hand from du Tillet's arm, and nodding to the young Prince of bohemia, said with a smile, "Two words with you, Count!"

The rivals, one a setting star, the other a rising sun, took their seat on four chairs outside the Café de Paris. Maxime was careful to place himself at a sufficient distance from certain old fogies who, from sheer habit, plant themselves in a row against the wall after one in the afternoon, to dry out their rheumatic pains. He had ample reasons for distrusting these old men. (See *A Man of Business.*)

"Have you any debts?" asked Maxime of the young man.

"If I had not, should I be worthy to succeed you?" replied la Palférine.

"When I ask you such a question, it is not to cast any doubt on the matter," said de Trailles. "I only want to know if they amount to a respectable sum-total, running into five or six."

"Five or six what?" said la Palférine.

"Six figures! Do you owe 50,000, 100,000?—My debts ran up to 600,000 francs."

La Palférine took off his hat with an air of mocking respect.

"If I had credit enough to borrow a hundred thousand francs," replied he, "I would cut my creditors and go to live

at Venice in the midst of its masterpieces of painting, spending the evening at the theatre, the night with pretty women, and——"

"And at my age where would you be?"

"I should not last so long," replied the young Count.

Maxime returned his rival's civility by just raising his hat with an expression of comical gravity.

"That is another view of life," he replied, as a connoisseur answering a connoisseur. "Then you owe——?"

"Oh, a mere trifle, not worth confessing to an uncle, if I had one. He would disinherit me for such a contemptible sum; six thousand francs."

"Six thousand give one more trouble than a hundred thousand," said Maxime sententiously. "La Palférine, you have a bold wit, you have even more wit than boldness; you may go far and become a political personage. Look here—of all the men who have rushed into the career which I have run, and who have been pitted against me, you are the only one I ever liked."

La Palférine colored, so greatly was he flattered by this confession, made with gracious bluntness, by the greatest of Parisian adventurers. This instinct of vanity was a confession of inferiority which annoyed him; but Maxime understood the reaction easy to foresee in so clever a man, and did his best to correct it at once by placing himself at the young man's discretion.

"Will you do something for me now that I am retiring from the Olympian course by marrying, and marrying well?—I would do a great deal for you," he added.

"You make me very proud," said la Palférine; "this is to put the fable of the lion and the mouse into practice."

"In the first place, I will lend you twenty thousand francs," Maxime went on.

"Twenty thousand francs?—I knew that if I walked this Boulevard long enough——!" said la Palférine in a parenthesis.

"My dear boy, you must set yourself up in some sort of

style," said Maxime, smiling. "Do not trot about on your two feet; set up six. Do as I have done; I never get lower than a tilbury——"

"But then you must want me to do something quite beyond my powers."

"No. Only to make a woman fall in love with you within a fortnight."

"A woman of the town?"

"Why?"

"That would be out of the question; but if she is a lady, quite a lady, and very clever——"

"She is a Marquise of the first water."

"You want her letters?" said the young Count.

"Ah, you are a man after my own heart!" cried Maxime. "No. That is not what is wanted."

"I am really to love her?"

"Yes, really and truly."

"If I am to go beyond æsthetics, it is quite impossible," said la Palférine. "With regard to women, you see, I have a kind of honesty; we may trick them, but not——"

"Then I have not been mistaken," exclaimed Maxime. "Do you suppose I am the man to scheme for some little tu'pence meanness? . . . No, you must go, you must dazzle and conquer. . . . I give you twenty thousand, and ten days to win in.—Till this evening at Madame Schontz's."

"I am dining there."

"Good," said Maxime. "By and by, when you want me, you will find me, Monsieur le Comte," he added, with the air of a king pledging his word rather than promising.

"The poor woman has done you some terrible mischief then?" asked la Palférine.

"Do not try to sound the depth of my waters, my son; but let me tell you that, if you succeed, you will secure such powerful interest, that when you are tired of your Bohemian life you may, like me, retire on the strength of a rich marriage."

"Does a time come, then, when we are tired of amusing ourselves," said la Palférine, "of being nothing, of living as the birds live, of hunting in Paris like wild men, and laughing at all that turns up?"

"We tire of everything, even of hell!" said Maxime with a laugh.—"Till this evening."

The two scamps, the old one and the young one, rose. As Maxime got into his one-horse cab, he said to himself:

"Madame d'Espard cannot endure Béatrix; she will help me.—To the Hôtel Grandlieu," he cried to the coachman, seeing Rastignac pass. Find a great man without a weakness.

Maxime found the Duchess, Madame du Guénic, and Clotilde in tears.

"What has happened?" he asked the Duchess.

"Calyste did not come in—it is the first time, and my poor Sabine is in despair."

"Madame la Duchesse," said Maxime, drawing the pious lady into a window-bay, "in the name of God, who will judge us, do not breathe a word as to my devotion; pledge d'Ajuda to secrecy; never let Calyste know anything of our plots, or we shall fight a duel to the death. When I told you this would not cost you much, I meant that you would not have to spend any monstrous sum. I want about twenty thousand francs, but everything else is my business; you may have to find some good appointments—one Receiver-General's, perhaps."

The Duchess and Maxime left the room. When Madame de Grandlieu came back to her two daughters, she heard a fresh lament from Sabine, full of domestic details, even more heartbreaking than those which had put an end to the young wife's happiness.

"Be calm, my child," said the Duchess to her daughter; "Béatrix will pay dearly for all your tears and misery; she will endure ten humiliations for each one of yours."

Madame Schontz had sent word to Claude Vignon, who had frequently expressed a wish to make the acquaintance of

Maxime de Trailles; she invited Couture, Fabien, Bixiou, Léon de Lora, la Palférine, and Nathan, whom Rochefide begged to have for Maxime's benefit. Thus she had a party of nine, all of the first water, excepting du Ronceret; but the Heir's Norman vanity and brutality were a match for Claude Vignon's literary force, for Nathan's poetry, la Palférine's acumen, Couture's keen eye to the main chance, Bixiou's wit, Finot's foresight, Maxime's depth, and Léon de Lora's genius.

Madame Schontz, who aimed at appearing young and handsome, fortified herself in such a toilet as women of that class alone can achieve—a point-lace cape of spider-web fineness, a blue velvet dress, of which the elegant bodice was buttoned with opals, her hair in smooth bands, and shining like ebony. Madame Schontz owed her fame as a beauty to the brilliancy and color of a warm, creamy complexion like a Creole's, a face full of original details, with the clean-cut, firm features—of which the Comtesse de Merlin was the most famous example and the most perennially young—peculiar perhaps to southern faces. Unluckily, since her life had been so calm, so easy, little Madame Schontz had grown decidedly fat. Her neck and shoulders, bewitchingly round, were getting coarse. Still, in France a woman's face is thought all-important, and a fine head will secure a long life to an ungraceful shape.

"My dear child," said Maxime as he came in and kissed Aurélie on the forehead, "Rochefide wanted me to see your home, where I have not yet been; it is almost worthy of his income of four hundred thousand francs. Well, he had less by fifty thousand a year when he first knew you; in less than five years you have gained for him as much as any other woman—Antonia, Malaga, Cadine, or Florentine—would have devoured."

"I am not a baggage—I am an artist!" said Madame Schontz, with some dignity. "I hope to end by founding a family of respectable folks, as they say in the play."

"It is dreadful, we all getting married," said Maxime,

dropping into a chair by the fire. "Here am I within a few days of making a Comtesse Maxime."

"Oh! how I should like to see her!" cried Madame Schontz. —"But allow me," she went on, "to introduce Monsieur Claude Vignon—Monsieur Claude Vignon, Monsieur de Trailles."

"Ah, it was you who let Camille Maupin—mine hostess of literature—go into a convent?" cried Maxime. "After you, God!—No one ever did me so much honor. Mademoiselle des Touches made a Louis XIV. of you, monsieur."

"And this is how history is written!" said Claude Vignon. "Did you not know that her fortune was spent in releasing Monsieur du Guénic's estates? If she knew that Calyste had fallen into the arms of her ex-friend!——" Maxime kicked the critic's foot, looking at Monsieur de Rochefide, "on my word, I believe she would come out of her nunnery to snatch him from her."

"I declare, my dear Rochefide," said Maxime, finding that his warning had failed to check Claude Vignon, "in your place I would give my wife her fortune, that the world might not suppose that she had taken up Calyste for want of money."

"Maxime is right!" said Madame Schontz, looking at Arthur, who colored violently. "If I have saved you some thousand francs to invest, you could not spend them better. I should have secured the happiness of both husband and wife.—What a good-conduct stripe!"

"I never thought of it," replied the Marquis. "But it is true; one is a gentleman first, and a husband after."

"Let me advise you of the appropriate moment for your generosity," said Maxime.

"Arthur," said Aurélie, "Maxime is right. Our generous actions, you see, old boy, must be done as Couture's shares must be sold," and she looked in the glass to see who was coming in, "in the nick of time."

Couture was followed by Finot, and in a few minutes all the guests were assembled in the handsome blue-and-gold

drawing-room of the "Hôtel Schontz," as the men called their place of meeting since Rochefide had bought it for his Ninon II. On seeing la Palférine come in the last, Maxime went up to him, drew him into a recess, and gave him the twenty bank-notes.

"Above all, do not be stingy with them," said he, with the native grace of a spendthrift.

"No one knows so well as you how to double the value of what appears to be a gift," replied la Palférine.

"Then you agree?"

"Well, since I take the money!" replied the youth, with some pride and irony.

"Very well. Nathan, who is here, will take you within two days to call on the Marquise de Rochefide," said Maxime in his ear.

La Palférine jumped as he heard the name.

"Do not fail to declare yourself madly in love with her; and, to rouse no suspicions, drink, wine, liqueurs no end! I will tell Aurélie to put you next to Nathan. Only, my son, we must now meet every night on the Boulevard de la Madeleine, at one in the morning; you to report progress, and I to give you instructions."

"I will be there, master," said the young Count, with a bow.

"What makes you ask a fellow to dine with us who comes dressed like a waiter?" said Maxime to Madame Schontz in a whisper, and looking at du Ronceret.

"Have you never seen 'The Heir?' Du Ronceret, from Alençon."

"Monsieur," said Maxime to Fabien, "you must know my friend d'Esgrignon?"

"Victorien dropped the acquaintance long since," replied Fabien, "but we were very intimate as boys."

The dinner was such as can only be given in Paris, and in the houses of these perfectly reckless women, for their refined luxury amazes the most fastidious. It was at a supper of this kind, given by a rich and handsome courtesan like Madame

Schontz, that Paganini declared that he had never eaten such food at the table of any sovereign, nor drunk such wine in any prince's house, nor heard such witty conversation, nor seen such attractive and tasteful magnificence.

Maxime and Madame Schontz were the first to return to the drawing-room, at about ten o'clock, leaving the other guests, who had ceased to veil their anecdotes, and who boasted of their powers, with sticky lips glued to liqueur glasses that they could not empty.

"Well, pretty one," said Maxime, "you are quite right. Yes, I came to get something out of you. It is a serious matter; you must give up Arthur. But I will see that he gives you two hundred thousand francs."

"And why am I to give him up, poor old boy?"

"To marry that noodle, who came from Alençon on purpose. He has already been a Judge; I will get him made President of the Court in the place of old Blondet, who is nearly eighty-two, and if you know how to catch the wind, your husband will be elected deputy. You will be people of importance, and crush Madame la Comtesse du Bruel——"

"Never!" cried Madame Schontz; "she is a Countess."

"Is he of the stuff they make counts of?"

"Well, he has a coat-of-arms," said Aurélie, seeking a letter in a handsome bag that hung by the fireplace, and handing it to Maxime. "What does it all mean? There are combs on it."

"He bears: Quarterly, the first argent three combs gules, second and third three bunches of grapes with stems and leaves all proper, fourth azure four pens or, laid in fret. Motto, *Servir,* and a squire's helmet.—No great things! They were granted by Louis XV.—They must have had some haberdasher grandfather, the maternal ancestry made money in wine, and the du Ronceret who got the arms must have been a registrar.—But if you succeed in throwing off Arthur, the du Roncerets shall be Barons at least, I promise you, my pretty pigeon. You see, child, you must lie in pickle for five or six years in the country if you want to bury la Schontz in

Madame la Présidente. The rascal cast eyes at you, of which the meaning was quite clear; you have hooked him."

"No," said Aurélie. "When I offered him my hand, he was as quiet as brandy is in the market."

"I will make up his mind for him if he is tipsy. Go and see how they are all getting on."

"It is not worth the trouble of going. I hear no one but Bixiou giving one of his caricatures, to which nobody is listening; but I know my Arthur; he thinks it necessary to be polite to Bixiou, and he is staring at him still, even if his eyes are shut."

"Let us go back then."

"By the by, for whose benefit am I doing all this, Maxime?" said Madame Schontz suddenly.

"For Madame de Rochefide," replied Maxime bluntly. "It is impossible to patch up matters between her and Arthur so long as you keep hold of him. To her it is a matter of being at the head of her house and having four hundred thousand francs a year."

"And she only offers me two hundred thousand francs down? I will have three hundred thousand if she is at the bottom of it. What, I have taken every care of her brat and her husband, I have filled her place in every way, and she is to beat me down? Look here, my dear fellow, I shall then have just a million. And besides that, you promise me the Presidency of the Court at Alençon if only I can make up for Madame du Ronceret——"

"Right you are!" said Maxime.

"How I shall be bored in that little town!" said Aurélie philosophically. "I have heard so much about that part of the country from d'Esgrignon and Madame Val-Noble, that it is as though I had lived there already."

"But if I could promise you the help of the title?"

"Oh, Maxime, if you can really do that.—Ay, but the pigeon refuses to fly——"

"And he is very ugly, with his skin like a plum; he has bristles instead of whiskers, and looks like a wild boar,

though he has eyes like a bird of prey. He will be the finest President ever seen.—Be easy! In ten minutes he will be singing you Isabelle's song in the fourth act of *Robert le Diable, 'Je suis à tes genoux.'*—But you must undertake to send Arthur back to fall at Béatrix's feet."

"It is difficult, but among us we may manage it."

At about half-past ten the gentlemen came into the drawing-room to take coffee. In the position in which Madame Schontz, Couture, and du Ronceret found themselves, it is easy to imagine the effect that was produced on the ambitious Norman by the following conversation between Couture and Maxime in a corner, carried on indeed in an undertone that they might not be overheard, but which Fabien contrived to hear.

"My dear fellow, if you were wise, you would accept the place of Receiver-General in some out-of-the-way place; Madame de Rochefide would get it for you. Aurélie's million francs would enable you to deposit the security, and you would settle everything on her as your wife. Then, if you steered your boat cleverly, you would be made deputy, and the only premium I ask for having saved you will be your vote in the Chamber."

"I shall always be proud to serve under you."

"Oh, my boy, you have had a very close shave! Just fancy, Aurélie thought herself in love with that Norman from Alençon; she wanted to have him made a Baron, President of the Court in his native town, and officer of the Legion of Honor. The noodle never guessed what Madame Schontz was worth, and you owe your good fortune to her disgust; so do not give such a clever woman time to change her mind. For my part, I will go and put the irons in the fire."

So Maxime left Couture in the seventh heaven of happiness, and said to la Palférine, "Shall I take you with me, my son?"

By eleven o'clock Aurélie found herself left with Couture, Fabien, and Rochefide. Arthur was asleep in an armchair; Couture and Fabien were trying to out-stay each other, but

without success. Madame Schontz put an end to this contest by saying to Couture, "Till to-morrow, dear boy!" which he took in good part.

"Mademoiselle," said Fabien, in a low voice, "when you saw me so unready to respond to the proposal you made me indirectly, do not imagine that there was the smallest hesitation on my part; but you do not know my mother; she would never consent to my happiness . . ."

"You are of age to address her with a *sommation respectueuse,** my dear fellow," retorted Aurélie insolently. "However, if you are afraid of mamma, you are not the man for my money."

"Joséphine!" said the Heir affectionately, as he boldly put his right arm round Madame Schontz's waist, "I believed that you loved me."

"And what then?"

"I might perhaps pacify my mother, and gain more than her consent."

"How?"

"If you would use your influence——"

"To get you created Baron, officer of the Legion of Honor, and President of the Court, my boy—is that it?—Listen to me, I have done so many things in the course of my life, that I am capable of being virtuous! I could be an honest woman, a loyal wife, and take my husband in tow to upper regions; but I insist on being so loved by him that not a glance, not a thought, shall ever be given to any heart but mine, not even in a wish. . . . How does that do for you? Do not bind yourself rashly; it is for life, my boy."

"With a woman like you, done, without looking twice!" cried Fabien, as much intoxicated by a look as he was by the West Indian liqueurs.

"You shall never repent of that word, my brave boy; you shall be a peer of France.—As to that poor old chap," she went on, looking at Rochefide asleep, "it is a, double I, all, o-v-e-r, ver—all over!"

* A legal form by which French sons can reduce the obstinacy of recalcitrant parents when they refuse their consent to a marriage.

She said it so cleverly, so prettily, that Fabien seized Madame Schontz and kissed her with an impulse of passion and joy, in which the intoxication of love and wine were second to that of happiness and ambition.

"But now, my dear child," said she, "you must remember henceforth to behave respectfully to your wife, not to play the lover, and to leave me to get out of my slough as decently as may be.—And Couture, who believed himself a rich man and Receiver-General!——"

"I have a horror of the man," said Fabien. "I wish I might never see him again!"

"I will have him here no more," said the courtesan with a little prudish air. "Now that we understand each other, my Fabien, go; it is one o'clock."

This little scene gave rise in the Schontz household, hitherto so perfectly happy, to a phase of domestic warfare between Arthur and Aurélie, such as any covert interest on the part of one of the partners is certain to give rise to.

The very next day Arthur woke to find himself alone; Madame Schontz was cold, as women of that sort know how to be.

"What happened last night?" asked he at breakfast, looking at Aurélie.

"That is the way of it, in Paris," said she. "You go to bed on a wet night, next morning the pavement is dry, and everything so frozen that the dust flies; would you like a brush?"

"But what ails you, dear little woman?"

"Go, go to your great gawk of a wife!"

"My wife?" cried the unhappy Marquis.

"Couldn't I guess why you brought Maxime here? You wanted to make it up with Madame de Rochefide, who wants you perhaps for some tell-tale baby.—And I, whom you think so cunning, was advising you to give her back her money!—Oh, I know your tricks. After five years my gentleman is tired of me. I am fat, Béatrix is bony; it will be a change. You are not the first man I have known with a taste for

skeletons. Your Béatrix dresses well too, and you are one of the men who like a clothes-horse. Besides, you want to send Monsieur du Guénic packing. That would be a triumph! How well it will look! Won't it be talked about! You will be quite a hero!"

At two o'clock Madame Schontz had not come to an end of her ironical banter, in spite of Arthur's protestations. She said she was engaged to dine out. She desired the "faithless one" to go without her to the Italiens; she was going to a first-night performance at the Ambigu-Comique, and to make the acquaintance of a charming woman, Lousteau's mistress, Madame de la Baudraye.

To prove his eternal attachment to his little Aurélie, and his aversion for his wife, Arthur offered to set out the very next day for Italy, and to live as her husband in Rome, Naples, or Florence, whichever Aurélie might prefer, giving her sixty thousand francs a year.

"All that is pure whims," said she. "That will not hinder your making it up with your wife, and you will be wise to do so."

At the end of this formidable discussion, Arthur and Aurélie parted, he to play and dine at the club, she to dress and spend the evening *tête-à-tête* with Fabien.

Monsieur de Rochefide found Maxime at the club, and poured out his complaints, as a man who felt happiness being torn up from his heart by the roots that clung by every fibre. Maxime listened to the Marquis' lament as polite people can listen while thinking of something else.

"I am a capital counselor in such cases, my dear fellow," said he. "Well, you make a great mistake in letting Aurélie see how much you care for her. Let me introduce you to Madame Antonia—a heart to let. You will see la Schontz sing very small. Why, she is seven-and-thirty, is your Schontz, and Antonia is but twenty-six! And such a woman! Her wits are not all in her brains, I can tell you. Indeed, she is my pupil. If Madame Schontz still struts out her pride, do you know what it means?"

"On my honor, no."

"That she means to get married; and then nothing can hinder her from throwing you over. After a six years' lease the woman has a right to do it.—But if you will listen to me, you can do better than that. At the present time your wife is worth a thousand Schontzes and Antonias of the Saint-Georges quarter. She will be hard to win, but not impossible; and she will make you as happy as Orgon! At any rate, if you do not wish to look like a fool, come to supper to-night at Antonia's."

"No, I love Aurélie too well; I will not allow her to have any cause for blaming me."

"Oh, my dear fellow! what a life you are making for yourself!" cried Maxime.

"It is eleven o'clock. She will have returned from the Ambigu," said Rochefide, going off. And he roared at the coachman to drive as fast as he could to the Rue de la Bruyère.

Madame Schontz had given distinct orders, and Monsieur was admitted exactly as though he and Madame were the best of friends; but Madame, informed of Monsieur's return, took care to let Monsieur hear the slam of her dressing-room door, shut as doors shut when a lady is taken by surprise. Then, on the corner of the piano, was Fabien's hat, intentionally forgotten, and conspicuously fetched away by the maid as soon as Monsieur and Madame were engaged in conversation.

"So you did not go to the play, little woman?"

"No, I changed my mind."

"And who has been here?" he asked quite simply, seeing the maid carry away the hat.

"Nobody."

To this audacious falsehood Arthur could only bow his head; this was passing under the Caudine forks of submission. True love has this magnanimous cowardice. Arthur behaved to Madame Schontz as Sabine did to Calyste, as Calyste did to Béatrix.

Within a week there was a change like that of a grub to a butterfly in the handsome and clever young Count, Charles-Edouard Rusticoli de la Palférine (the hero of the sketch called *A Prince of Bohemia,* which makes it unnecessary to describe his person and character in this place). Hitherto he had lived very poorly, making up his deficits with the audacity of a Danton; now he paid his debts, by Maxime's advice he had a little low carriage, he was elected to the Jockey Club, to the club in the Rue de Grammont, he became superlatively elegant. Finally, he published in the *Journal des Débats* a novel which earned him in a few days such a reputation as professional writers do not achieve after many years of labor and success, for in Paris nothing is so vehement as what is to prove ephemeral. Nathan, perfectly certain that the Count would never write anything more, praised this elegant and impertinent youth to Madame de Rochefide in such terms, that Béatrix, spurred on by the poet's account of him, expressed a wish to see this prince of fashionable vagabonds.

"He will be all the more delighted to come here," replied Nathan, "because I know he is so much in love with you as to commit any folly."

"But he has committed every folly already, I am told."

"Every folly? No," replied Nathan, "he has not yet been so foolish as to love a decent woman."

A few days after the plot of the Boulevard had been laid between Maxime and the seductive Count Charles-Edouard, this young gentleman, on whom Nature had bestowed—in irony, no doubt—a pathetically melancholy countenance, made his first incursion into the nest in the Rue de Courcelles, where the dove, to receive him, fixed an evening when Calyste was obliged to go out with his wife. If ever you meet la Palférine—or when you come to the *Prince of Bohemia* in the third part of this long picture of modern manners—you will at once understand the triumph achieved in a single evening by that sparkling wit, those astonishing high spirits, especially if you can conceive of the capital by-play of the sponsor who

agreed to second him on this occasion. Nathan was a good fellow; he showed off the young Count as a jeweler shows off a necklace he wants to sell, by making the stones sparkle in the light.

La Palférine discreetly was the first to leave; he left Nathan and the Marquise together, trusting to the great author's co-operation, which was admirable. Seeing the Marquise quite amazed, he fired her fancy by a certain reticence, which stirred in her such chords of curiosity as she did not know existed in her. Nathan gave her to understand that it was not so much la Palférine's wit that won him his successes with women as his superior gifts in the art of love; and he cried him up beyond measure.

This is the place for setting forth a novel result of the great law of contrasts, which gives rise to many a crisis in the human heart, and accounts for so many vagaries that we are forced to refer to it sometimes, as well as to the law of affinities. Courtesans—including all that portion of the female sex which is named, unnamed, and renamed every quarter of a century—all preserve, in the depths of their hearts, a vigorous wish to recover their liberty, to feel a pure, saintly, and heroic love for some man to whom they can sacrifice everything. (See *A Harlot's Progress.*) They feel this antithetical need so keenly, that it is rare to find a woman of the kind who has not many times aspired to become virtuous through love. The most frightful deception cannot discourage them. Women who are, on the contrary, restrained by education, and by their rank in life, fettered by the dignity of their family, living in the midst of wealth, crowned by a halo of virtue, are tempted—secretly, of course—to try the tropical regions of passion. These two antagonistic types of women have, at the bottom of their hearts, the one a little craving for virtue, the other a little craving for dissipation, which Jean-Jacques Rousseau first had the courage to point out. In those it is the last gleam of the divine light not yet extinct; in these it is a trace of the primitive clay.

This remaining claw of the beast was tickled, this hair of

the devil was pulled with the greatest skill, by Nathan. The Marquise seriously wondered whether she had not hitherto been the dupe of her intellect, whether her education was complete. Vice!—is perhaps the desire to know everything.

Next day Calyste was seen by Béatrix as what he was—a perfect and loyal gentleman, devoid of spirit and wit.

In Paris, to be known as a wit, a man's wit must flow as water flows from a spring; for all men of fashion, and Parisians in general, are witty. But Calyste was too much in love, he was too much absorbed to observe the change in Béatrix, and satisfy her by opening up fresh veins; he was very colorless in the reflected light of the previous evening, and could not give the greedy Béatrix the smallest excitement. A great love is a credit account open to such voracious drafts on it that the moment of bankruptcy is inevitable.

In spite of the weariness of this day—the day when a woman is bored by her lover!—Béatrix shuddered with fears as she thought of a duel between la Palférine, the successor of Maxime de Trailles, and Calyste du Guénic, a brave man without brag. She therefore hesitated to see the young Count any more; but the knot was cut by a simple incident. Béatrix had a third share in a box at the Italiens—a dark box on the pit tier where she might not be seen. For some few days Calyste had been so bold as to accompany the Marquise and sit behind her, timing their arrival late enough to attract no attention. Béatrix was always one of the first to leave before the end of the last act, and Calyste escorted her, keeping an eye on her, though old Antoine was in waiting on his mistress.

Maxime and la Palférine studied these tactics, dictated by the proprieties, by the love of concealment characteristic of the "Eternal Baby," and also by a dread that weighs on every woman who, having once been a constellation of fashion, has fallen for love from her rank in the zodiac. She then fears humiliation as a worse agony than death; but this agony of pride, this shipwreck, which women who have kept their place on Olympus inflict on those who have fallen, came upon her,

by Maxime's contriving, under the most horrible circumstances.

At a performance of *Lucia,* which ended, as is well known, by one of Rubini's greatest triumphs, Madame de Rochefide, before she was called by Antoine, came out from the corridor into the vestibule of the theatre, where the stairs were crowded with pretty women, grouped on the steps, or standing in knots till their servants should bring up their carriages. Béatrix was at once recognized by all; a whisper ran through every group, rising to a murmur. In the twinkling of an eye every woman vanished; the Marquise was left alone as if plague-stricken. Calyste, seeing his wife on one of the staircases, dared not join the outcast, and it was in vain that Béatrix twice gave him a tearful look, an entreaty to come to her support. At that moment la Palférine, elegant, lordly and charming, quitted two other women, and came, with a bow, to talk to the Marquise.

"Take my arm and come defiantly with me; I can find your carriage," said he.

"Will you finish the evening with me?" she replied, as she got into her carriage and made room for him by her side.

La Palférine said to his groom, "Follow Madame's carriage," and got in with Madame de Rochefide, to Calyste's amazement. He was left standing, planted on his feet as though they were made of lead, for it was on seeing him looking pale and blank that Béatrix had invited the young Count to accompany her. Every dove is a Robespierre in white feathers.

Three carriages arrived together at the Rue de Courcelles with lightning swiftness—Calyste's, la Palférine's, and the Marquise's.

"So you are here?" said Béatrix, on going into her drawing-room leaning on the young Count's arm, and finding Calyste already there, his horse having out-distanced the other two carriages.

"So you are acquainted with this gentleman?" said Calyste to Béatrix with suppressed fury.

"Monsieur le Comte de la Palférine was introduced to me by Nathan ten days ago," said Béatrix; "and you, monsieur, have known me for four years——"

"And I am ready, madame," said la Palférine, "to make Madame d'Espard repent of having been the first to turn her back on you—down to her grandchildren——"

"Oh, it was *she?*" cried Béatrix. "I will pay her out."

"If you want to be revenged, you must win back your husband, but I am prepared to bring him back to you," said la Palférine in her ear.

The conversation thus begun was carried on till two in the morning, without giving Calyste an opportunity of speaking two words apart to Béatrix, who constantly kept his rage in subjection by her glances. La Palférine, who was not in love with her, was as superior in good taste, wit, and charm as Calyste was beneath himself; writhing on his seat like a worm cut in two, and thrice starting to his feet with an impulse to stop la Palférine. The third time that Calyste flew at his rival, the Count said, "Are you in pain, monsieur?" in a tone that made Calyste sit down on the nearest chair, and remain as immovable as an image.

The Marquise chatted with the light ease of a Célimène, ignoring Calyste's presence. La Palférine was so supremely clever as to depart on a last witty speech, leaving the two lovers at war.

Thus, by Maxime's skill, the flames of discord were raging in the divided households of Monsieur and Madame de Rochefide.

On the morrow, having heard from la Palférine, at the Jockey Club, where the young Count was playing whist with great profit, of the success of the scene he had plotted, Maxime went to the Hôtel Schontz to ascertain how Aurélie was managing her affairs.

"My dear fellow," cried Madame Schontz, laughing as she saw him, "I am at my wits' end. I am closing my career with the discovery that it is a misfortune to be clever."

"Explain your meaning."

"In the first place, my dear friend, I kept my Arthur for

a week on a regimen of kicking his shins, with the most patriotic old stories and the most unpleasant discipline known in our profession. 'You are ill,' said he with fatherly mildness, 'for I have never been anything but kind to you, and I perfectly adore you.'—'You have one fault, my dear,' said I; 'you bore me.'—'Well, but have you not all the cleverest men and the handsomest young fellows in Paris to amuse you?' said the poor man. I was shut up. Then I felt that I loved him."

"Hah!" said Maxime.

"What is to be done. These ways are too much for us; it is impossible to resist them. Then I changed the stop; I made eyes at that wild boar of a lawyer, my future husband, as great a sheep now as Arthur; I made him sit there in Rochefide's armchair, and I thought him a perfect fool. How bored I was!—But, of course, I had to keep Fabien there that we might be discovered together——"

"Well," cried Maxime, "get on with your story! When Rochefide found you together, what next?"

"You would never guess, my good fellow. By your instructions the banns are published, the marriage contract is being drawn, Notre-Dame de Lorette is out of court. When it is a case of matrimony, something may be paid on account. —When he found us together, Fabien and me, poor Arthur stole off on tiptoe to the dining-room, and began growling and clearing his throat and knocking the chairs about. That great gaby Fabien, to whom I cannot tell everything, was frightened, and that, my dear Maxime, is the point we have reached.—Why, if Arthur should find the couple of us some morning on coming into my room, he is capable of saying, 'Have you had a pleasant night, children?' "

Maxime nodded his head, and for some minutes sat twirling his cane.

"I know the sort of man," said he. "This is what you must do; there is no help for it but to throw Arthur out the window and keep the door tightly shut. You must begin again the same scene with Fabien——"

"How intolerable! For, after all, you see, the sacrament has not yet blessed me with virtue. . . ."

"You must contrive to catch Arthur's eye when he finds you together," Maxime went on; "if he gets angry, there is an end of the matter. If he only growls as before, there is yet more an end of it."

"How?"

"Well, you must be angry; you must say, 'I thought you loved and valued me; but you have ceased to care for me; you feel no jealousy——,' but you know it all, chapter and verse.—'Under such circumstances Maxime' (drag me in) 'would kill his man on the spot' (and cry). 'And Fabien' (make him ashamed of himself by comparing him with Fabien)—'Fabien would have a dagger ready to stab you to the heart. That is what I call love! There, go! Good-night, good-bye! Take back your house; I am going to marry Fabien. He will give me his name, he will! He has thrown over his old mother!'—In short, you——"

"Of course, of course! I will be magnificent!" cried Madame Schontz. "Ah, Maxime! There will never be but one Maxime, as there never was but one de Marsay."

"La Palférine is greater than I," said de Trailles modestly. "He is getting on famously."

"He has a tongue, but you have backbone and a grip. How many people have you kept going! How many have you doubled up!"

"La Palférine has every qualification; he is deep and well informed, while I am ignorant," replied Maxime.—"I have seen Rastignac, who came to terms at once with the Keeper of the Seals. Fabien will be made President of the Court and officer of the Legion of Honor after a year's probation."

"I will take up religion," replied Madame Schontz, emphasizing the phrase so as to win an approving look from Maxime.

"Priests are worth a hundred of us!" said Maxime.

"Really?" said Aurélie. "Then I may find some one to talk to in a country town.—I have begun my part. Fabien

has already told his mother that grace has dawned on me, and he has bewitched the good woman with my million and his Presidency; she agrees that we are to live with her; she asked for a portrait of me, and has sent me hers; if Love were to look at it, he would fall backwards.—Go then, Maxime; I will demolish the poor man this evening. It goes to my heart."

Two days later la Palférine and Maxime met at the door of the Jockey-Club.

"It is done," said Charles-Édouard.

The words, containing a whole horrible and terrible drama, such as vengeance often carries out, made the Comte de Trailles smile.

"We shall have all de Rochefide's jeremiads," said Maxime, "for you and Aurélie have finished together. Aurélie has turned Arthur out of doors, and now we must get hold of him. He is to give three hundred thousand francs to Madame du Ronceret and return to his wife. We will prove to him that Béatrix is superior to Aurélie."

"We have at least ten days before us," said Charles-Édouard sapiently, "and not too much in all conscience; for now I know the Marquise, and the poor man will be handsomely fleeced."

"What will you do when the bomb bursts?"

"We can always be clever when we have time to think it out; I am grand when I am able to prepare for it."

The two gamblers went into the drawing-room together, and found the Marquis de Rochefide looking two years older; he had no stays on; he had sacrificed his elegance; his beard had grown.

"Well, my dear Marquis?" said Maxime.

"Oh, my dear fellow, my life is broken . . ." and for ten minutes Arthur talked, and Maxime gravely listened; he was thinking of his marriage, which was to take place a week hence.

"My dear Arthur, I advised you of the only means I knew of to keep Aurélie, and you did not choose . . ."

"What means?"

"Did I not advise you to go to supper with Antonia?"

"Quite true.—How can I help it? I love her.—And you, you make love as Grisier fences."

"Listen to me, Arthur; give her three hundred thousand francs for her little house, and I promise you I will find you something better. I will speak to you again of the unknown fair one by and by; I see d'Ajuda, who wants to say two words to me."

And Maxime left the inconsolable man to talk to the representative of the family needing consolation.

"My dear fellow," said the other Marquis in an undertone, "the Duchess is in despair; Calyste has quietly packed up and procured a passport. Sabine wants to follow the fugitives, catch Béatrix, and claw her. She is expecting another child; and the whole thing looks rather murderous, for she has gone quite openly and bought pistols."

"Tell the Duchess that Madame de Rochefide is not going, and within a fortnight the whole thing will be settled. Now, d'Ajuda, your hand on it? Neither you nor I have said anything or known anything. We shall admire the effects of chance."

"The Duchess has already made me swear secrecy on the Gospels and the Cross."

"You will receive my wife a month hence?"

"With pleasure."

"Everybody will be satisfied," replied Maxime. "Only warn the Duchess that something is about to happen which will delay her departure for Italy for six weeks; it concerns Monsieur du Guénic. You will know all about it later."

"What is it?" asked d'Ajuda, who was looking at la Palférine.

"Socrates said before his death, 'We owe a cock to Æsculapius.' But your brother-in-law will be let off for the comb," replied la Palférine without hesitation.

For ten days Calyste endured the burthen of a woman's anger, all the more implacable because it was seconded by a

real passion. Béatrix felt that form of love so roughly but truly described to the Duchess by Maxime de Trailles. Perhaps there is no highly organized being that does not experience this overwhelming passion once in a lifetime. The Marquise felt herself quelled by a superior force, by a young man who was not impressed by her rank, who, being of as noble birth as herself, could look at her with a calm and powerful eye, and from whom her greatest feminine efforts could scarcely extract a smile of admiration. Finally, she was crushed by a tyrant, who always left her bathed in tears, deeply hurt, and believing herself wronged. Charles-Édouard played the same farce on Madame de Rochefide that she had been playing these six months on Calyste.

Since the scene of her mortification at the Italiens, Béatrix had adhered to one formula:

"You preferred the world and your wife to me, so you do not love me. If you wish to prove that you do love me, sacrifice your wife and the world. Give up Sabine, leave her, and let us go to live in Switzerland, in Italy, or in Germany."

Justifying herself by this cool ultimatum, she had established the sort of blockade which women carry into effect by cold looks, scornful shrugs, and a face like a stone citadel. She believed herself rid of Calyste; she thought he would never venture on a breach with the Grandlieus. To give up Sabine, to whom Mademoiselle des Touches had given her fortune, meant poverty for him.

However, Calyste, mad with despair, had secretly procured a passport, and begged his mother to forward him a considerable sum. While waiting for the money to reach him, he kept watch over Béatrix, himself a victim to the jealousy of a Breton. At last, nine days after the fateful communication made by la Palférine to Maxime at the club, the Baron, to whom his mother had sent thirty thousand francs, flew to the Rue de Courcelles, determined to force the blockade, to turn out la Palférine, and to leave Paris with his idol appeased.

This was one of those fearful alternatives when a woman who has preserved a fragment of self-respect may sink for

ever into the depths of vice, but may, on the other hand, return to virtue. Hitherto Madame de Rochefide had regarded herself as a virtuous woman, whose heart had been invaded by two passions; but to love Charles-Édouard, and allow herself to be loved by Calyste, would wreck her self-esteem; for where falsehood begins, infamy begins. She had granted rights to Calyste, and no human power could hinder the Breton from throwing himself at her feet and watering them with the tears of abject repentance. Many persons wonder to see the icy insensibility under which women smother their passions; but if they could not thus blot out the past, life for them would be bereft of dignity; they could never escape from the inevitable collusion to which they had once succumbed.

In her entirely new position Béatrix would have been saved if la Palférine had come to her; but old Antoine's alertness was her ruin.

On hearing a carriage stop at the door, she exclaimed to Calyste, "Here are visitors!" and she hurried away to prevent a catastrophe.

Antoine, a prudent man, replied to Charles-Édouard, who had called solely to hear these very words, "Madame is gone out."

When Béatrix heard from the old servant that the young Count had called, and what he had been told, she said, "Quite right," and returned to the drawing-room, saying to herself, "I will be a nun!"

Calyste, who had made so bold as to open the window, caught sight of his rival.

"Who was it?" he asked.

"I do not know; Antoine has not come up yet."

"It was la Palférine——"

"Very possibly."

"You love him, and that is why you find fault with me.—I saw him!"

"You saw him?"

"I opened the window."

Béatrix dropped half dead on the sofa. Then she tried to

temporize to save the future; she put off their departure for ten days on the plea of business, and vowed to herself that she would close her door against Calyste if only she could pacify la Palférine, for these are the horrible compromises and burning torments that underlie lives that have gone off the rails on which the great train of Society runs.

As soon as Béatrix was alone she felt so miserable, so deeply humiliated, that she went to bed; she was ill; the fearful struggle that rent her heart seemed to leave a horrible reaction, and she sent for the doctor; but, at the same time, she despatched to la Palférine the following note, in which she avenged herself on Calyste with a sort of frenzy:—

"Come to see me, my friend, I am in desperation. Antoine turned you away when your visit would have put an end to one of the most horrible nightmares of my life, by rescuing me from a man I hate, whom I hope never to see again. I love no one on earth but you, and I never shall love any one but you, though I am so unhappy as not to please you so much as I could wish . . ."

She covered four pages, which, having begun thus, ended in a rhapsody far too poetical to be reproduced in print, in which Béatrix so effectually compromised herself, that in conclusion she said:

"Am I not wholly at your mercy? Ah, no price would be too great for me to prove how dearly you are loved!"

And she signed her name, a thing she had never done for either Calyste or Conti.

On the following day, when the young Count called on the Marquise, she was taking a bath. Antoine begged him to wait. But he dismissed Calyste in his turn, when, starving with passion, he also came early; and la Palférine could see him as he got into his carriage again in despair.

"Oh, Charles," said the Marquise coming into the drawing-room, "you have ruined me!"

"I know it, madame," replied he coolly. "You swore that

you loved me alone, you offered to give me a letter in which you will set down the reasons you would have had for killing yourself, so that in the event of your being unfaithful to me I might poison you without fear of human justice—as if superior souls needed to resort to poison to avenge themselves!—You wrote, 'No price would be too great for me to prove how dearly you are loved!'—Well, I find a contradiction between these closing words of your letter and your speech, 'You have ruined me.' I will know now whether you have had the courage to break with du Guénic."

"You are revenged on him beforehand," said she throwing her arms round his neck. "And that matter is enough to bind you and me for ever——"

"Madame," said the Prince of bohemia coldly, "if you desire my friendship, I consent; but there are conditions——"

"Conditions?"

"Yes, conditions—as follows: You must be reconciled with Monsieur de Rochefide, resume the honors of your position, return to your fine house in the Rue d'Anjou—you will be one of the queens of Paris. You can achieve this by making Rochefide play a part in politics and guiding your conduct with such skill and tenacity as Madame d'Espard has displayed. This is the position which any woman must fill whom I am to honor with my devotion——"

"But you forget that Monsieur de Rochefide's consent is necessary."

"Oh, my dear child," replied la Palférine, "we have prepared him for it. I have pledged my honor as a gentleman that you were worth all the Schontzes of the Quartier Saint-Georges put together, and you owe it to my honor——"

For eight days, every day, Calyste called on Béatrix, and was invariably sent away by Antoine, who put on a grave face and assured him, "Madame la Marquise is seriously ill."

From thence Calyste rushed off to la Palférine, whose servant always exclaimed, "Monsieur le Comte is gone hunting." And each time Calyste left a letter for the Count.

At last, on the ninth day, Calyste, in reply to a note from la Palférine fixing a time for an explanation, found him at home, but with him Maxime de Trailles, to whom the younger rake wished, no doubt, to give proof of his abilities by getting him to witness the scene.

"Monsieur le Baron," said Charles-Édouard quietly, "here are the six notes you have done me the honor of writing to me. They are unopened, just as you sent them; I knew beforehand what might be in them when I heard that you had been seeking me everywhere since the day when I looked at you out of the window, while you were at the door of a house where, on the previous day, I had been at the door while you were at the window. I thought it best to remain ignorant of an ill-judged challenge. Between you and me, you have too much good taste to owe a woman a grudge because she has ceased to love you. And to fight your preferred rival is a bad way to reinstate yourself.

"Also, in the present case, your letters were invalidated, null and void, as lawyers say, in consequence of a radical error: you have too much good sense to quarrel with a husband for taking back his wife. Monsieur de Rochefide feels the Marquise's position is undignified. You will no longer find Madame de Rochefide in the Rue de Courcelles; six months hence, next winter, you will see her in her husband's home. You very rashly thrust yourself into the midst of a reconciliation between a married couple to which you yourself gave rise by failing to shelter Madame de Rochefide from the mortification she endured at the opera-house. As we left, Béatrix, to whom I had already brought some friendly advances on her husband's part, took me in her carriage, and her first words were, 'Go and bring Arthur!'

"Oh, Heavens!" cried Calyste, "she was right; I had failed in my devotion——"

"But, unfortunately, monsieur, poor Arthur was living with one of those dreadful women—that Madame Schontz, who for a long time had expected every hour to find herself deserted. Madame Schontz, who, on the strength of Béatrix's

complexion, cherished a desire to see herself some day the Marquise de Rochefide, was furious when she saw her castles in the air fallen. Those women, monsieur, will lose an eye if they can spoil two for an enemy; la Schontz, who has just left Paris, has been the instrument of spoiling six! And if I had been so rash as to love Béatrix, the sum-total would have been eight. You, monsieur, must have discovered that you need an oculist."

Maxime could not help smiling at the change in Calyste's face; he turned pale as his eyes were opened to the situation.

"Would you believe, Monsieur le Baron, that that wretched woman has consented to marry the man who furnished her with means of revenge? Oh! women!—You understand now why Béatrix should shut herself up with Arthur for a few months at Nogent-sur-Marne, where they have a charming little house; they will recover their sight there. Meanwhile their house will be entirely redecorated; the Marquise means to display a princely style of splendor. When a man is sincerely in love with so noble a woman, so great, so exquisite, the victim of conjugal devotion, as soon as she has the courage to return to her duties as a wife, the part of those who adore her as you do, who admire her as I do, is to remain her friends when they can be nothing more.

"You will forgive me for having thought it well to invite Monsieur de Trailles to be present at this explanation, but I was particularly anxious to make this all perfectly clear. For my part, I especially wished to assure you that, though I admire Madame de Rochefide's cleverness as a woman, she is to me supremely odious."

"And that is what our fairest dreams, our celestial loves end in," said Calyste, overwhelmed by so many revelations and disenchantments.

"In a fish's tail," cried Maxime, "or, which is worse, in an apothecary's gallipot! I have never known a first love that did not end idiotically. Ah, Monsieur le Baron, whatever there may be that is heavenly in man finds its nourishment in Heaven alone! This is the excuse for us rakes. I, monsieur,

have gone deeply into the question, and, as you see, I am just married. I shall be faithful to my wife, and I would urge you to return to Madame du Guénic—but—three months hence.

"Do not regret Béatrix; she is a pattern of those vain natures, devoid of energy, but flirts out of vainglory—a Madame d'Espard without political faculty, a woman devoid of heart and brain, frivolous in wickedness. Madame de Rochefide loves no one but Madame de Rochefide; she would have involved you in an irremediable quarrel with Madame du Guénic, and then have thrown you over without a qualm; in fact, she is as inadequate for vice as for virtue."

"I do not agree with you, Maxime," said la Palférine; "she will be the most delightful mistress of a great house in all Paris."

Calyste did not leave the house without shaking hands with Charles-Édouard and Maxime de Trailles, thanking them for having cured him of his illusions.

Three days later the Duchesse de Grandlieu, who had not seen her daughter Sabine since the morning of the great conference, called one morning and found Calyste in his bathroom. Sabine was sewing at some new finery for her baby-clothes.

"Well, how are you children getting on?" asked the kind Duchess.

"As well as possible, dear mamma," replied Sabine, looking at her mother with eyes bright with happiness. "We have acted out the fable of the Two Pigeons—that is all."

Calyste held out his hand to his wife and pressed hers tenderly.

1838–1844.